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ABSTRACT

This handbook is for volunteer tutors, student interns, and VISTA volunteers working with adult basic education (ABE) and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learners. The community-based handbook contains information about adult literacy and tutoring--what tutors do, who the learners are, and how the literacy learning process works. Introductory pages describe the Adult Academy of Rhode Island, its literacy programs, community-based education, and an overview of literacy learners, ESL, and reading and writing. The next section covers the following: a comparison of traditional and learner-directed education models, an introduction to problem solving in tutoring, an overview of learners' literacy and educational needs, and suggestions for observing learners. A section on getting started explains the rationale behind a learner-centered approach to adult literacy learning, presents some basic teaching tools, and provides activities and materials to use with specific topics such as family housing, work, and transportation. Included with this section is a sample curriculum and lesson plan. Specific practices for ABE and ESL form the content of the next two sections, followed by a discussion of tutors' roles and responsibilities. The next section catalogues a wide range of approaches and activities: audiotapes; bingo; cloze; dialogue journals; dyads; flashcards; grids; interview/information grids; alphanumeric grids; hangman; language experience approach; operations; pair work; photos; picture stories; realia; scrambling/sequencing; total physical response; visuals; and writers' groups. Four learner-generated publications and 21 books/materials from publishing houses are included. The concluding section provides suggestions for tutors and learners and tutor responses from workshops using this handbook. (NLA)

ED339863

ADULT ACADEMY TUTOR TRAINING MANUAL

BROWN UNIVERSITY

PROVIDENCE, RI

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The Adult Academy of Rhode Island

Established in 1978, the Adult Academy is a statewide adult literacy project with its administrative offices at Brown University's Center for Public Service. The Adult Academy offers a wide range of innovative literacy programs designed to meet the needs of special populations ranging from senior citizens to the developmentally disabled, with models ranging from peer-based instruction to group tutoring to one-on-one tutoring. Programs include several Writers Groups, the New Readers and Writers Project, and college volunteer programs for the developmentally disabled and the homeless.·

The Academy advocates a learner-centered pedagogy, or educational approach. This approach takes into account the specific culture, background, personal experience, and immediate needs of the program participant. Adult literacy learners come from a wide range of areas -- geographically , professionally and personally. Learners come from countries as different as the U.S., Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, Taiwan, Poland, and Malaysia. Some people are learning to read for the first time. Some are learning not only to read, but also to speak English. Learners are married, single, widowed, divorced, older, younger, working, unemployed, homeless, parents, relatives, physically challenged and all are motivated to learn. Some people have had no previous education in this or any other country; others have had negative experiences with schooling and yet others had their educations interrupted due to family or economic constraints.

The Adult Academy approach revolves around learner centered practice. Two overriding assumptions shape learner centered practice: **Literacy exists within a sociocultural context**, and **classroom content is driven by learners' needs**. Teaching practice divides into two broad strands: **recurring events** (such as generation of weekly classroom news, journal writing, and other language experience activities pertaining to regular, ongoing events) from which **themes** evolve. Learners experiences, needs and concerns dictate content. As students learn how to learn, they gain independent learning strategies and their learning options and opportunities increase. Through this process, learners develop a critical consciousness of their own skills, strengths, and progress in learning.

Academy staff realize that a narrow definition of literacy can be inflicted upon learners by well-meaning but under-prepared volunteers and tutors; the idea that there are many literacies requires an examination of learners' views of literacy. How do literate people view and interact with the world differently from those who are not literate, and by extension, how do literate people view opportunities for education in literacy differently from those who are not literate? At the Adult Academy, we ask these questions over and over again.

· Parts of this article have been adapted from A Handbook for Practitioners: ESL/literacy for adult non-native speakers of English, Literacy/ESL Program, International Institute of Rhode Island, Isserlis/1991, and from the Adult Academy's FY91 annual report.

Literacy Programs

• The Adult Academy has successfully researched and developed the first **basic literacy program for the Deaf** Rhode Island has seen since the 1970's. The program was developed by a broad coalition of community leaders and service providers in the adult Deaf community.

Program structure and design stem from the idea that sign language is an independent language of the Deaf which carries an independent Deaf culture. Therefore, classes run on a model of bilingual education; the teachers are Deaf - native speakers of sign language - and provide all instruction in sign language.

Classes are team-taught by pairs of Deaf teachers. Learners, professionals, and community members advocate strongly for this model, asserting that it offers the most effective communication between learners and teachers, ensures cultural sensitivity on the part of the teachers, and offers crucial role models to adults who have experienced years of school failure.

• The Adult Academy and Progreso Latino have developed a program offering **basic literacy instruction in Spanish** to the Spanish speaking communities of Central Falls. The program is based on peer-instruction and operated in coordination with ESL programs offered through Progreso Latino, SER/Jobs for Progress, and Brown ESL Student Tutoring. The program met with such enthusiasm this year that both volunteer tutors and learners decided to continue classes through the summer of 1991.

The program is particularly successful in developing leadership within the local Latino community. Tutors work in pairs to present bi-weekly presentations and workshops to one another on topics, techniques, or issues they find important in their work as tutors. This approach creates a clear sense of ownership and involvement in the program. Simultaneously, the approach prepares tutors to conduct similar trainings for volunteers at other Spanish speaking agencies interested in duplicating the model at their own sites.

• The Adult Academy is developing an innovative approach to training and utilizing tutors at three sites. Professional staff train, coordinate, and support some 50 volunteers to lead **collaborative learning activities** with **small groups of learners** in the basic literacy classrooms at Cranston Adult Education and Traveler's Aid, a program for the homeless in Downtown Providence. Volunteers also work in the ESL classrooms at Pawtucket Adult Education. Volunteers, learners, and teachers in these programs are unusually enthusiastic about the value and effectiveness of this approach. The effect on learners' self-esteem, their level of involvement and classroom participation, and their rates of progress transformed the classrooms where this project operates.

Community-Based Education

The Adult Academy focuses strongly on community-based education. Workshops and trainings take place in the communities immediately surrounding the sites, if not actually at the site. Volunteers and learners sit on the Adult Academy Advisory Council as well as on planning committees for individual programs such as the Spanish Literacy Program.

The Adult Academy involves learners in project implementation and development at several levels. Learners in all programs are the primary source of instructional materials as the programs focus strongly on learner generated writings. Most become involved in some form of collaborative or peer instruction. Advanced learners participate in tutor trainings, and some go on to tutor themselves. Learners are the core staff for *Expressions*, and serve on hiring committees for Academy staff.

The Adult Academy involves volunteers in many leadership roles as well. In addition to sitting on the Advisory Council, tutors assist in training workshops. In some instances tutors run workshops for one another. In many projects, tutors are the driving force behind community-based recruitment. Tutors play a strong role in the evaluation and refinement of program and training design through their feedback. In many cases, tutors move into paid positions as program coordinators.

The Adult Academy finds that this level of structural involvement, for learners, tutors, and interested community members, adds tremendous strengths to its programming. Participants feel their contributions and knowledge are respected. As a result, they often draw in friends and peers to join programs. Equally importantly, the organization benefits from the vast range of perspectives, cultures, and experiences which participants bring to the classroom. Our goal is to see programming which is inclusive, supportive, and respectful of the strengths, skills, and needs of learners and their communities.

To become involved with the Adult Academy, please call 863-3986.

Copies of the journal, *Expressions*, are available at The Adult Academy, 25 George St, Providence, RI 02912.

Literacy Programs

• The Adult Academy offers **one-to-one tutoring to developmentally disabled learners** at Brown University and Providence College. Twenty-six learners participated in these programs last year. Learners come to the program from group homes and sheltered worksites around the country. Through literacy learning, they develop vital social and independent living skills.

• The Adult Academy supports the **New Readers and Writers Project**. In this project, adult learners from programs across Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts submit writings to and produce a journal of learner writings. The Adult Academy distributes this journal, known as *Expressions*, to hundreds of literacy learners and programs across the state.

Expressions is an entirely learner-directed program. The Editorial Board members are all literacy learners themselves. The Board makes decisions regarding topics, criteria for selection, layout, and other editorial policies for the journal. Adult Academy staff assist the Board with administration, coordination, and production of *Expressions*.

The Providence Journal-Bulletin's Office of Public Affairs recently completed printing a compilation booklet of *Expressions* as a public service to the state. This booklet will offer vital classroom and reading material to Rhode Island's adult literacy learners. The Editorial Board and program staff plan to use and distribute the booklet at outreach workshops and multiple community-based sites over the course of the next year.

• The Adult Academy offers **Writers' Groups** as an alternative model of adult instruction based on learner participation and peer education. The Writers' Groups run within other human service agencies, and are staffed by a VISTA Volunteer and one student intern. Groups run at two mental health treatment and support facilities - Providence Center and the Veteran's Community Care Center - and two community programs for the elderly - the North Providence Seniors Center and the Central Falls Community Center. Roughly 50 people participate in these programs. They are major contributors to the Academy's journal, *Expressions*. One participant is also an editor for the journal.

Writers' Groups programs offer a learning environment which is simultaneously therapeutic and educational. The groups are integrated carefully within the daytime therapy programs at mental health centers. At senior centers, the groups serve more of a community support function. In both cases, individuals who might not otherwise participate in literacy education become enthusiastic and involved. The groups play a central role in individuals' development of self-esteem and overall sense of community.

preface

The handbook you are holding was written for volunteer tutors, student interns, and VISTA Volunteers working with ABE and ESL learners. In it you'll find information about adult literacy and tutoring -- what tutors do, who the learners are, and how the literacy learning process works.

Many people have contributed to the handbook, including tutors and learners. Your feedback is important to us, too. You will receive the handbook in sections; we have not put it in a permanent binding because we want to include your comments and suggestions as they arise. We have the entire text on a computer disk so that we can easily add, delete and change pieces of the handbook to make it more useful to you.

Once you've received all the sections, you may want to re-read them all, or you might focus on particular sections as your interests dictate. Some sections are repetitive, so that, for example, you might find similar information in both ABE and ESL sections. As you continue to work as a tutor you might want to review earlier sections, or look into the *for further reading* articles found at the end of several sections.

This handbook was written by Janet Isserlis, with considerable input from Andrew Gross, Sr. Pat Farley, Sally Gabb, tutors, learners, and members of the Adult Academy staff. Parts of the handbook have been adapted from A Hand-book for Practitioners: ESL/literacy for adult non-native speakers of English, Literacy/ESL Program, International Institute of Rhode Island. 1991

contents

This handbook has been designed to be read in sections. Each section accompanies workshops which tutors attend prior to tutoring, as well as follow up workshops that occur during the course of the year. The handbook fits into a three-ring binder so that additional sheets can be added.

The sections in this handbook appear in the following sequence:

- preface
- introduction
- overview
- models of education
- getting started
- ABE (Adult Basic Education) literacy approaches and techniques
- ESL (English as a second language) literacy approaches and techniques
- tutor's roles and responsibilities
- approaches and activities
- materials
- conclusion: stepping back, looking ahead

The handbook is designed for tutors of adult learners in both adult basic education (ABE) and in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Although methods and suggestions for ABE learners are often adaptable to ESL settings, occasionally an arrow

will indicate that a particular section is more directly aimed at one or the other group of learners. Where no arrow appears, the information pertains to both ESL and ABE tutors.

introduction

Welcome to literacy tutoring. Adult literacy learners come from a wide range of areas -- geographically, professionally and personally. Some people are learning to read for the first time. Some are learning not only to read, but also to speak English. Learners are married, single, widowed, divorced, older, younger, working, homeless, unemployed, parents, relatives, physically challenged, developmentally disabled, Deaf and hearing, and all are motivated to learn. Some people have never been to school in this or any other country; others have had negative experiences with schooling and yet others had their educations interrupted due to family or other constraints. In short, adult learners have had a wide range of experiences with educational settings.

Assumptions

In thinking about learning and teaching literacy and language, it is important to examine our own assumptions about learning and learners; to think about differences and similarities between our experiences and those of our learners. These are some assumptions we make:

-- learners come to class knowing a lot about the world, and already know how to do many things;

-- reading and writing occur in larger social contexts -- we don't read without written words in front of us, and we don't write with-out having some reader in mind;

-- adults do things with reading and writing; part of the ongoing work between learners and tutors has to do with finding out about learners' own uses of reading and writing;

-- there are many skills and needs around interaction with print, from functional literacy
-- ***decoding*** (reading out sounds) & ***encoding*** (writing down sounds) --
to a more critical use of reading and writing to understand the word and the world (Freire[1]);

-- learners want to learn to read and write for many reasons;

-- classroom content develops from learners' needs;

-- reading and writing for meaning and communication does not exclude developing subskills (sounding out, spelling, grammar) in a context with meaning;

-- the learning process is enhanced when learners and teachers work together from strengths each possess, when learners and the learning process are valued, and when community is established among learners and teachers.

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[1] Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, notes frequently that learning to read the word is one step of an educational process of learning to read the world.

As you get to know the learners you'll be working with, you'll find that a certain bond develops between and/or among you. This bonding is very important in building a community of learners who trust and support each other in their common goals of learning to read and write. Their reasons for learning may vary greatly, but their motivation to learn is consistently strong. Because learners' reasons for wanting to learn are such strong motivating factors, a learner centered approach to literacy learning is most useful in helping the tutors to build community with (not for) their learners. The following questions are frequently asked by many people working with literacy learners:

- How do people create a learning community?

- Why is such a community valued more by some learners and not as much by others?

- How can learners make the transitions from language experience writing (writing based on learners' own words, stories and experiences) and unconventional spellings and forms to more mainstream literacies?

- Do all learners see a need to make these transitions?

What are your assumptions?
What questions can you add to these?

what does it look like?

The typical adult learning center/classroom/facility is often found in an unused schoolroom during evening hours, in a church basement, at a library table, and sometimes in a learner's kitchen or livingroom.

Some spaces have large blackboards or newsprint pads. In other places the tutor and learners share a pad of lined paper and maybe some books or worksheets.

What makes adult learning situations vital is the **exchange** between tutors and learners. The literacy learning process is dynamic. People ask questions, get frustrated, solve problems, figure things out -- at a small table, at desks and chairs, on sofas, on benches.

Learners are highly motivated. They are largely undaunted by cold rooms in the winter and hot rooms in the summer. They come to classes and tutoring sessions because they truly want to learn. Their desire is a powerful thing.

Learners and tutors become comfortable with each other in a relatively short period of time. What takes longer is the actual learning of literacy. Learning literacy in English (for people who don't speak the language very well, **and** for people who have spoken it all their lives) is a long and laborious process. Literacy is much more than phonetic reading and writing.

The tutor's role is to provide extra assistance and encouragement. The tutor helps learners see and appreciate their own progress.

In the pages that follow you'll read more about learners -- who they are, what they hope to accomplish, and how tutors can assist them in meeting their goals. You'll also read about reading and writing and you'll be asked to think about your expectations and concerns about tutoring. We hope that your tutoring experience will be productive and positive.

Questions for reflection

- What kinds of roles have you had in the classroom(s) you've worked in? (as learner, tutor, teacher, etc.).

- How have you felt in these roles?

- What kinds of interaction would you like to have with learners in the classroom?

- What kind of support do you think you will need?

overview

[Workshop one for participants in Adult Academy workshops]

During this workshop, facilitators will be asking you to think about who adult literacy learners are, what reading and writing are, and to discuss who you are, your expectations about tutoring.

Who are we, who are our learners?

Please use the space below (or a separate sheet of paper) to write about your goals and objectives as a tutor. Please use these questions as a guide -- don't expect to answer all of them.

- What interests you about being a tutor?
- What do you think the experience will be like?
- What experiences do you bring?
- What do you hope to learn during the training sessions?
- What do you expect to learn from tutoring?
- Have you tutored or been tutored before?
- What do you think your learners will want/need to learn?
- What do you hope will happen?
- What defines a good teacher?

You can write as much or as little as you like; you might want to write a few notes -- this is for your own thinking and future reference.

about learners

Native speakers of English who are looking for assistance with literacy may or may not have had positive experiences in school, or may have had little experience at all with formal education. They have functioned in the world for a long time and have many strengths, skills and abilities. They speak the language which they are learning to read and write.

The following was written by a native speaker of English, who was working on gaining reading and writing skills:

School Experience **by Tommy C.**

When I was in elementary school that was the time when a friend would read softly and I would read aloud to the class. Sometimes I would get the students to read paragraphs from today's lesson and I could memorize questions and answers and I could participate in class.

High school was very much similar but a little more advanced. But time had passed too, and I had passed with the time. I had passed up on reading yet I was more concerned about covering up than learning how to read. Now that I see reading is a necessity in life, I must learn how to read in order to progress in my life. For reading is a necessity in my life and I can't just let time pass by like I did in elementary school and high school with social promotion because in life there is no social promotion.

Tommy used many coping strategies in school to get by. Eventually he realized that he needed more independence as a reader. What other strategies do you think that people who can't read might use to avoid asking for help? Why would people not want others to know that they have trouble reading or writing?

The following was written by a non-native speaker of English, who was working on gaining reading, writing, and communication skills:

My name is Gudom Thagnabouth. I am from Laos. I was born at Savannakhet Provence, on October 12, 1942. Before in 1975 I was a soldier my last rank is MAJOR. After 1975 my country tooke cover by Communist Govement. I had captured and then their send my to the consentration camp at north Laos. Everybody call Vieng xay Camp. Over there I was worked hard every day. Until 12 years ago. In 1987 I had released. Their send my to the Vientiane City. I stay there for one month only. Then I was escaped to the THAILAND. I stay in the refugee camp at Thailand for 4 months. Then their send my to the BATAAN Provence in PHILIPPINES refugee camp. Everybody call P.R.P.C. for study English second language for 6 months. NOW I live in Providence, RHODE ISLAND.

Thangnabouth, Laos: Smith Hill Community Center

Gudom uses many coping strategies in his new country to get by. He realized before coming that he would need English language and literacy skills to survive here. What other strategies do you think that immigrants and refugees might use to survive here? What feelings do you think they bring with them when they come to a classroom to learn? What might English represent to them?

The following article, written by Andrew Gross, reviews issues concerning refugees and immigrants. How are these issues similar to or different from the problems raised by Tommy and Gudom? Are problems with literacy similar to the problems of people who do not speak English very well?

A Joint Newsletter of The Center for Public Service and Brown Community Outreach

Community Matters

March 1990

Immigrants, Refugees, and ESL Education

Andrew Gross

Education plays a crucial role in determining access to power in our community. Education can be a process which develops skills, strengths, and knowledge fundamental to survival in this society. Education can also be an active, supportive, and participatory process which brings together members of a community. This kind of community-based education can teach community members to work together to understand their differences, to learn about one another's resources, and to teach one another about their cultures and histories.

Immigrants and refugees have a particularly urgent need for this kind of active and supportive education. As members of cultural, linguistic, and, most often, racial minority groups, Providence's refugee and immigrant populations have fewer tools than most Americans to confront the urban realities of racism, discrimination, and the struggle for economic security. English as a Second Language (ESL) education, for both adults and kids, can develop the skills, strengths, and knowledge necessary to face these realities. At the same time, ESL education can build students' self-confidence and self-esteem in such a way that they feel that they can contribute culturally and personally to building a stronger community.

ESL education does not take place in a vacuum, nor is it divorced from the issues which cultural and linguistic mi-

ESL

norities face every day. Cross-cultural and racial relations in Providence are complex and often volatile. The mid-January shooting at Central High School is only the most explicit and the most recent reminder of the strains and tensions which exist between recent (in this case Southeast Asian) and more established groups of immigrants in Providence's inner city[1] In order to define the role of ESL education in confronting this kind of violence, it is crucial to understand its roots. It is important to understand also, that violence is most often an act of desperation, a reaction to the feeling that all other doors are closed. To understand that feeling, we must look at the position of immigrants and refugees in the Providence community.

The kind of violence that exploded at Central does not start within the immigrant communities - it is a response. As a Cambodian bilingual counselor told me yesterday, "Cambodians are afraid to drive through many neighborhoods because the people throw rocks at the Cambodians' cars". She explained that there is significant competition between Cambodians and other racial groups in Providence for factory work. This competition extends to housing and the control of small businesses as well. The resulting inter-racial tension is not hard to spot. One need only look at the city paper to find incident after incident of intimidation and harassment of adult immigrants by members of the surrounding community. The bilingual counselor pointed out that this competition reverberates powerfully among the kids in the school system in the form of racial harassment and violence.

Racial discrimination, linguistic discrimination, and cultural hostility fed the feelings which exploded in the Central High incident. They also feed the tensions and hostilities which develop along the assembly lines and on the streets in Olneyville, Central Falls, South Providence, Elmwood, Federal Hill, and many of the other neighborhoods in the Greater Providence area. Furthermore, Cambodians are not the only language minority or refugee group in Providence. There are also thousands of Latinos who have fled from economic or political oppression in all parts of the Caribbean Basin. Although each group has its own distinct position, all confront similar hostilities. Periodically, these tensions erupt in incidents of focused violence.

To students of urban America, or even of Providence alone, this story is a familiar one. Recent immigrants with little knowledge of the English language, workers' rights, or the U.S. labor system are pushed to accepting lower paying jobs, longer hours, and poorer working conditions than more established members of the urban working class. Thus job competition breeds hostility.

Similarly, economic pressures often force immigrants to move into neighborhoods where competition for housing is already fierce - and slumlords are all too happy to rent to residents who don't know their housing laws. Resentment on the part of neighborhood residents builds. These feelings appear most often in the form of racist harassment and fierce hostility to the language and culture of the new immigrants.

It would appear that the new immigrant is caught in a vise. On the one hand, immigrants face exclusion from both institutional resources and higher paying jobs, and on the other hand they face hostility from surrounding community members. Without the power, knowledge, or resources to utilize institutions to combat massive discrimination and hostility, some immigrants, particularly the young, can become so desperate that they resort to violence as a means of self-defense. Without control of English or knowledge of urban laws and culture, the immigrant frequently faces a real state of crisis.

Although this situation sounds truly dire, it is far from hopeless because not all immigrants face all of these problems all day, every day. Most face them in some form or another at some point in their lives. I have drawn the picture to this degree of severity in an attempt to illustrate the sort of pressures which make this month's shootings no surprise. The challenge for all members of our community is to work together to develop ongoing outreach and educational programs which develop the strengths and skills of Providence's immigrant communities in such a way that these individuals can establish a base of security and power, and a sense of community.

As a community with several tens of thousands of recent immigrants and refugees, Providence faces both ongoing and impending crises of cross-cultural and racial relations. As members of this community who have access to tremendous resources, Brown students, faculty, and administrators face both the challenge and the responsibility of working together with other members of the Greater Providence community to develop greater linguistic skills and cross-cultural understanding within the immigrant community. One of the most important skills on the road to self-sufficiency and strength for immigrants is control of the English language. English is essential for access to the most basic urban resources: transportation, health care, employment, education, and government services. English enables immigrants to speak for themselves in the community and work for

ESL continued

themselves to broaden community understanding of their cultures, experiences, and knowledge.

ESL education becomes the route through which immigrants learn to access the resources available to them and to regain control of their lives. The ESL classroom is often the place where immigrants and refugees can gain a greater knowledge and understanding of the majority cultures and American power structures so that they can take advantage of the resources available to them. The ESL classroom is generally a place where members of different immigrant groups can come together and learn about one another and share resources to form a stronger community. One-to-one ESL tutoring, on the other hand, provides a place for language learners and English speakers to form friendships and share in one another's lives. ESL education, then, works toward a stronger community and more independent, powerful individuals.

Equally important, ESL education is a place for members of the majority cultures to learn about some of the many other cultures, histories, and experiences which constitute urban America. We live in a multi-cultural society, whether the media and the government acknowledge that fact or not, and the best way to understand that reality is for the members of our many cultures to come together and learn from one another. On the street level, violence and racism stem greatly from ignorance, fear, and misunderstanding. The ESL classroom can be a place to build bridges between cultural and racial groups.

At this point, I hope that you are wondering just what all this has to do with you. Knowledge of an opportunity to work with members of your community to improve a difficult, even oppressive, set of conditions translates into a mandate to act. I would also say that there are not many times in our lives when we have a chance to form close friendships or trusting, learning relationships with people from backgrounds and cultures entirely different from our own. Teaching ESL is such an opportunity. As a community, Providence has generated a vast array of agency level responses to the needs of its immigrant and refugees. These agencies are largely not-for-profit agencies which rely on volunteers to carry out their work.

The Center for Public Service has access to a large number of programs which enable members of the Brown community to work with immigrants and refugees of all ages to develop skills in English as a Second Language (ESL). The Center houses a cluster of six community based, volunteer, ESL programs which are known collectively as Brown ESL Student Tutoring (BEST). In addition, both BEST and Brown Community Outreach network with a large number of community based ESL programs in Providence which offer an even wider range of tutoring and teaching opportunities. The Center, BEST, and BCO exist to foster and encourage the Brown community's active involvement with the issues of the larger Providence community.

1. See Providence Journal-Bulletin from week of 1/12/90, both headline and inside stories. Two Cambodian teenagers, a Central student and a friend from Lowell, fired ten shots from a .357 Magnum and a .38 revolver into a crowd of Central students. They were aiming at a white student who had been harassing Cambodian students. They missed their target and hit two uninvolved students. Both survived the incident.

Andrew Gross is a VISTA Volunteer who coordinates the Brown English as a second language Student Tutoring Program

What are some questions you'd like to pursue? What information would you like about refugees and immigrants? What information would you add to Andrew's writing?

How do you think that learning literacy is different for native speakers of English and for people whose first language isn't English?

Some of the questions above are answered by literacy learners who have written in ***Voices,*** a magazine containing writings by many new readers. They discuss their feelings about coming to literacy classes, strategies they had used to get by before coming to school, and changes that occurred in their lives as they gained the ability to read and write. Your learners may or may not want to discuss their feelings about learning; particularly in the beginning they may be reticent to share their feelings. Every learner is different and has different reasons for coming to a class. The more we understand the range of reasons that prompt learners to seek help with literacy, the better prepared we are to find effective ways of helping them learn.

What is reading? What is writing?

Reading and writing are processes of deriving meaning from print. They are connected processes; in order to read, something needs to have been written, and in order to write, there needs to be a reader.

reading

As you read this page, you may have certain expectations about what will be written here. You know that this is a handbook about literacy learning, and so you expect to see words like 'literate', 'reading' and 'writing' frequently. You expect to learn about the learning process, and about adult education. You think about what you already know about learning, and you relate your own experience to the reading you do. This use of previous knowledge and experience, predicting and expecting has to do with a **schema**, or framework, you already have in your mind about the topic at hand.

Schema helps us read, by allowing us to use what we know to process what we encounter in print. Good readers use schema all the time, unconsciously. We don't read each and every word, sounding it out, but we move our eyes quickly across a page.

When we first learned to read, many of us learned with a **phonics**-based approach. Our teachers taught us the letters of the alphabet, and their corresponding sounds. We sounded out words, but we also read very simple sentences, because our teachers wanted to help us learn to read words in a meaningful context. This **whole language** approach recognizes that it is difficult to learn words if the words are not arranged in some way that has meaning that we can remember. For example, read this next line only once:

```
There fast how not some very staples table
next before green.
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How much of what you just read do you remember? Chances are that you've remembered very little, and

you may have just gone back to re-read the sentence, because it made no sense. It was just a string of words. Similarly, sentences like, "Pat, put that hat on the cat at bat," are not terribly useful (particularly to adults) because they contain little connection to adults' experiences nor do they contain meaningful information. Although the sentence does a good job of drilling *-at* sounds, it may not help someone to make meaning from print.

Reading is really a combination of looking, understanding that letters represent sounds which represent words, understanding those words, and connecting many of them while also trying to accomplish a certain thing. We read for many purposes: to find out how to put something together by reading instructions, to see what time or day it is (reading a clock or calendar), to see what's on TV or at the movies, to find out about someone far away (reading a letter), to see how much money we owe someone (reading a bill), or to see what happens at the end of the story.

writing

When we write we generate some of the same information mentioned above; our purposes for writing may also include letting someone know where or how we are, (leaving a note, writing a letter), passing along a telephone message, complaining about a mistake in a bill, signing a pay check, filling out an insurance form, writing a check or money order.

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The spaces between words, their size and arrangement on a page and various punctuation marks also help us to deal with the visual image of print. New readers may not be aware of spaces between words, or use of capital letters or other kinds of punctuation when they begin writing. Many learners like to copy passages from a book or blackboard; their orientation to the use of the page and the line for writing will tell you a great deal about their ability and experience with writing.

reading and understanding

We use schema, knowledge of print conventions (punctuation, capitalization, etc.) and phonics to make sense of what we read.

Please read the passage on the next page and answer the questions that follow:

A Pardstan Giberter for Farfie

Glis was very fraper. She had denarpen Farfie's pardstan. She didn't talp a giberter for him. So she conlanted to plimp a pardstan binky for him. She had just sparved in the binky when he jibbed in the gorger.

"Clorsty Pardstan!" she boffed.

"That's a croustish pardstan binky," boffed Farfie, "but my pardstan is on Jenstan. Agstan is Kelstan."

"In that ruspen," boffed Glis, "I won't whank you your giberter until Jenstan."

1. Who was very fraper?

2. Did Glis talp a giberter for Farfie?

3. What happened after she had just sparved in the binky?

4. What did she boff at first?

5. What did Farfie boff in reply?

6. When is Glis planning to whank his giberter?

Because you know how writing is structured, and you used cues like punctuation, subjects and objects (who said or did what to whom), you could probably answer all the questions correctly. But what was the story about? What's a ruspen? What's fraper? We know fraper is an adjective because it followed the word very. We suspect that l -ff means said, because it followed words in quotatio. narks. But what about non-native speakers of Englis., or people with little prior experience with such school-like questions?

Some people with previous experiences with school understand the kinds of comprehension questions you just answered, and like you, can answer them correctly. Students with little experience in such question and answer activity may have trouble not only answering the questions, but more importantly in focusing in on the main idea(s) of the reading. Without discussion into the heart of a story, it is possible that sc ne learners might not follow everything they read. Before learners are asked to respond to questions about specific, isolated details of a reading, it is important that they discuss what the reading is about overall.

With both native and non-native speakers of English, it's important to encourage learners to talk about what they read.

reading and writing in the classroom and beyond: what learners see, say, read and write

Very beginning level ESL learners need a combination of work on phonics and exposure to high frequency (often used) **sight words**, such as name, date, address, Providence, Cranston, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, exit, emergency, etc. The language experience approach (see **approaches and activities**) is very useful for helping people use the spoken English that they already know and begin to write and read, using their own words. They come to recognize certain sight words, and also begin to understand the connection between the letters of the alphabet, their sounds, and the ways they combine together to form words.

-- Using the immediate surroundings -- signs around the learning center, in the classroom, etc. -- as well as asking learners to talk about the reading and writing they do everyday, are helpful ways of learning about their reading abilities, and about what they want to learn.

-- Listening to and writing learners' stories (through the language experience approach) helps learners to get to know more about each other, and also helps you learn about their lives as well as their abilities with language and literacy.

As you continue to read through this manual, you'll find suggestions for working with literacy learners at all levels. One helpful thing to remember is that people learn to read once. Learning to read a second language consists of transferring one's understanding of the reading process to another language (and sometimes another alphabet). The principal process of reading (as discussed above) is the same in any language. ESL learners will be learning to read in English, for the most part, but some will choose to learn to read in their native language*. Learners who already speak English will be learning to read and write many words with which they are familiar. For both native speakers and ESL learners, learning to read and write is a process that takes time. Your patience and encouragement will be greatly appreciated by the learners with whom you work, and plays a critical role in helping them maintain motivation and energy.

Above all, remember that your input -- both as a tutor and as a friendly and supportive presence -- will be valued by the learners you work with and by the classroom teachers whom you assist. Individual and small group attention does make a difference to the learning process.

**The Adult Academy has programs for people learning to read and write in Spanish, and is looking into programs for people who speak other languages as well. Most learners in Adult Academy programs want to learn to read in English, and it is for people who are working with those learners that our comments are addressed.*

models of education

There are different models or frameworks of education, which reflect teachers' beliefs and assumptions about learners. The Adult Academy, like many adult education providers, advocates a learner-centered approach to adult literacy instruction. In this section we compare and contrast traditional education and learner-directed education. We also look at different ways of implementing learner-centered tutoring sessions.

This section covers:

- a comparison of traditional and learner-directed education models;
- an introduction to problem-posing;
- ways of using problem-posing in tutoring;
- an overview of learners' literacy and educational needs
- suggestions for observing learners in classes, in preparation for beginning to tutor.

Adults start or return to schools for many reasons. Adult educators have developed many models over the years, which range from traditional teacher-centered/ book oriented models to more participatory approaches. Working with adult learners -- native speakers of English, immigrants or refugees -- demands constant attention to the fact that adults have already formed many of their own ideas. Adult learners have lived independently in the world for many years. Adults don't necessarily need teachers to tell them what to do. They may, however, want help learning how to use written or spoken language to do the things they need and want to do.

Traditional education often involves a '**banking approach**' in which teachers deposit their knowledge and skills into the students. The teacher decides what is of value and when it should be deposited. In the **problem-posing approach, or learner-directed education**, a facilitator helps learners define their goals, pursue the knowledge and skills they need, and works with them to achieve their goals. Traditional education focuses on memorization; problem-posing focuses on communication, critical thinking and action. Traditional education focuses on preserving the status quo; problem-posing education focuses on learning new skills to meet concrete needs. The following contrasts the two approaches:

Banking Approach	Problem-Posing Approach
• The teacher determines the goals	• The learner determines the goals with the teacher.
• The teacher is knowledgeable and the students are ignorant.	• The teachers and learners all have useful knowledge and skills.
• The teacher gives knowledge and skills, and the students receive them.	• Teacher and learners collaborate in the acquisition of knowledge and skills.
• The students memorize and store the knowledge and skills for future use.	• The learners apply the knowledge and skills in the pursuit of their own daily and long term goals.
• The teacher talks and the students listen.	• The facilitator and learners discuss issues together.
• Learning prepares students to fit in and adapt.	• Learning develops learners' ability to speak up and stand up.
• The teacher directs the class and the students comply.	• The facilitator and learners jointly decide the direction of class sessions.
• The education process perpetuates the status quo.	• The new education process helps create new realities.

adapted from Literacy for Empowerment: A Resource Handbook for Community Based Educators. (1988). Association for Community Based Education. Washington, D. C.

What the previous page refers to as problem-posing can be viewed as a form of learner-centered, or learner-directed education. We approach education as an ongoing dialogue between tutors and learners, and among learners themselves. The banking model (which many of us faced throughout our own schooling) leaves the teacher with the responsibility of deciding what learners should know, and how and when they should know it. A more participatory approach encourages and permits learners to express what it is they need and want to learn.

As you continue to read and learn more about the adult learner populations in your area, you may find yourself with an increasing number of questions and concerns. Cross cultural issues, mental health and community resources, differences in educational and economic backgrounds -- among learners, between yourself and your learners -- may become topics for you and your learners to explore.*

Learners may wish to discuss problems they have in dealing with neighbors, or misunderstandings at the workplace.
A problem-posing approach leads learners through a process of **identifying** a problem, **discussing** the problem, **identifying common problems among learners, finding resources** and **taking action.** Sally Gabb, a literacy practitioner and teacher trainer has developed a guide to problem posing, which has been adapted on the following pages.

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* You may want to learn more about agencies which address these issues, or read about them yourself. Adult Academy staff should be able to point you in helpful directions.

A Guide to Problem Posing
The process is a simple one:

1. look at a common daily experience of conflict
2. discuss the experience
3. identify and name the problem(s)
4. discuss it
5. find out more about it
6. work with others to understand it
7. think of action to change the situation
8. think about results/consequences of actions
9. take action to make concrete change

In order to focus concretely on a problem that learners identify, tutors develop *codes* so that learners can go through the steps listed above.

code writing: identifying common problems

A **code** is a representation of an issue or concern which might be the cause of particular problems. Newspaper pictures or stories work well. Pieces written by learners' experiences can be very effective. Usually, an open-ended visual representation -- such as a photograph of a street in a typical neighborhood, or of a boss and some workers -- serves as a useful code. Learners examine the photo and discuss what, if any problems, they feel are identified in the photo.

For example, a photo of a street in a run down neighborhood may lead to discussion about problems of urban crime, low income housing, concerns about children, etc.

On the other hand, learners might not particularly view the situation as problematic, in which case the process changes slightly. The **code** might then be used to generate discussion or writing about how learners feel about their own neighborhoods, or ESL learners might contrast the photo of a US neighborhood with recollections (and photos, if they have them) of their own countries.

code writing: identifying common problems

If learners do identify problems within the code, these steps outline a way to approach the problem:

1. naming: what is happening?
2. How do people with this problem feel?
3. Have you had a problem like this? Has anyone you know ever had this problem? What did you/they do?
4. Why did this happen? What are the reasons for this kind of problem?
5. What can be done?

finding resources and taking action

These questions can help you with the process of taking action to solve the problem:

1. What do you need to know?
2. Who can you work with?
3. Where can you get more information?
4. What are possible actions that can be taken?
5. What might be the results?

These questions and discussion can lead to very productive writing activities. Learners can read and discuss each others' ideas, and write further. Tutors support and encouragement here is crucial.

evaluating your actions

After taking action, you can ask these questions:

1. What new information did we learn?
2. What do we understand better?
3. What did I learn about myself?
4. What did we learn about how we learn as a group?
5. What was the result or impact of the action?
6. Can we address the causes better now?
7. What new problems did we uncover?

Once again, these questions and discussion can lead into very meaningful writing and reading activities, and develop critical thinking skills.

Learners may not always be interested in discussing issues. Their privacy and learning needs must be respected. As they become more comfortable with the learning situation, with themselves, with each other and with you, you may find that issues will be voiced within the learning context. A problem-posing approach -- wherein a learners identify, discuss, and consider action on problem -- may be helpful. In other cases, allowing learners to discuss their concerns, generate writing, or look for additional information may be all they need. Learners decide which issues they want to pursue, what action, if any, they want to take. At times, the fact that they can discuss their concerns, is sufficient. Their action may be the discussion itself, and/or writing that emerges from it. It is important, too, to reinforce the idea that writing can be action.

problem-posing/problem imposing: encouraging thought without imposing an alien point of view

Many of our learners come from countries where oppression, fear and persecution are commonplace. Others are voluntary immigrants, who chose to leave their countries of origin for a number of reasons. Some lack legal status. Some are legal citizens who own stores and homes. Adult learners confront a wide array of life circumstances and respond to them as individuals.

There may be instances where a group, or several individuals will want to pursue a problem and seek ways in which to resolve it. They may want to band together to write to an elected official, or to help someone deal with an unscrupulous employer or landlord. They may, however, chose **not** to pursue a course of action that a tutor might feel they should undertake, or that the tutor might themselves undertake under particular circumstances.

Although the decisions we make in terms of nurturing, encouraging or coercing our students into making choices can be controversial, the bottom line is to consider not only the usefulness of our interventions but also the responsibilities tutors incur through the ways they encourage learners to act.

A case to consider:

Learners working with an ESL teacher at a jewelry factory reported that they were being docked 15 minutes pay if they were as much as five minutes late for work. The teacher investigated the legality of this action, and informed learners that they could challenge their employer. She suggested they invite a personnel representative to the class, to discuss policy in general terms. Learners opposed the suggestion, and further opposed taking any action whatsoever.

As an adult educator the teacher was in no position to take responsibility for supporting the six learners should an action result in their subsequent loss of employment. The learners had made their choice. Although she spent a considerable amount of time at the plant, she was not on their payroll and had no right to instigate any action. Had she pushed the learners to take steps they were unwilling to take, she would have been imposing her views upon the learners inappropriately; she would have been *problem-imposing*.

Tutors and facilitators need to know how and when to step back and respect our learners as fully capable adults. Presuming to know 'what's right' doesn't necessarily help another person handle their own struggles. Therefore, it is important to be particularly careful about respecting the rights of our learners, and accepting the choices and decisions they make.

getting started towards the classroom

Tutors need to consider the role of the classroom in the larger community -- and in learners' lives -- when making decisions about content and methods. Attentive listening and observation helps tutors to learn from and with adult learners. A first step in the listening process occurs when tutors first meet the learners.

Who are the learners?
learners and their literacies

Tutors usually do not meet learners during the initial intake process -- (the interview and form-filling period that occurs when learners enter a program). Nevertheless, the information about learners detailed below can be useful. Some of this information appears on learners' intake sheets. Learners may choose to reveal other information during the course of the tutoring sessions. It is important to be sensitive to learners' rights to privacy and keep in mind that their lives and experiences must inform any effective teaching. As tutors and learners get to know each other, many of the questions below will arise as part of the natural course of events. It is very important to allow learners to become comfortable with the tutor and with each other before the tutor attempts to elicit information about learners' backgrounds.

Learning about learners -- through listening to their stories, and sometimes through direct questioning -- helps the tutor to understand why the learners have come to class and what their needs might be.

Listening, understanding, and respecting learners' needs and interests is basic to a learner-centered model of education. Through dialogue with learners, tutors can focus on relevant and interesting topics which strengthen the learners' existing skills and develop new ones.

During the workshop sessions, tutors discuss their expectations about who the learners might be, and what they want. Before observing a class or beginning to tutor on your own, the following questions should help you to get a clearer idea of the possible range of learners' needs and abilities.

background -- rural? urban? Is the learner a native speaker of English? What was the role of education in her/his life? Is the learner an immigrant or refugee? Did s/he attend school in the native country or in the US?

literate environment -- What reading/writing occurs outside the classroom? What is the interaction around reading/writing in the home, among household members?

family roles

- when young: who was responsible for helping with literacy activity, if any? (for example, was there one person in the household who was responsible for reading letters from relatives, or keeping track of money?)
- as parent/older person: who is responsible for such literacy work now?
- re: children -- what are learners' goals for their children? What are their children's goals/hopes for themselves?

Who is in the household?

_____ children
_____ spouse,
_____ significant other
_____ other family members
_____ others (friends, friends' children, roommates, etc.)

school
Any previous education and/or school in native country?

What do learners remember about school? (hours, environment, roles of teachers and students, etc.).

Have they attended school locally or elsewhere in the US?

What expectations do they bring about learning?

What expectations about teachers? about themselves?

learning
What learning environments work for learners? (e.g. Do they like to learn/study in the kitchen, living room?, etc.).

What about learning styles? Do people like working in small groups, learning individually, writing, listening to someone read while they follow along silently? Do they like to listen to tapes?

What are learners' barriers, worries, fears about school?

How do they use media -- books, tapes, TV, magazines, circulars, newspapers? What media are in the house?

What supplies are in the house?

goals:
What are learners' goals? Why do they want to learn?

How have they identified their goals?

Do learners have a clear sense of their own strengths?

Where do learners need to read or write regularly?

How sophisticated or formal are the skills they need?

Classroom observation

Before you begin working with your learner(s), you may be invited to observe a class session. The following questions are designed to help you focus your attention. Please read through these questions before you visit the class; then decide which of the questions you want to focus on. You may come up with your own list of questions as well.

The purpose of the observation session is to give you a concrete example of teaching and learning in action, and to give you a sense of how an adult learning session happens. After the observation period, you are invited to discuss what you saw with other tutors and facilitators.

You may find that a teacher's approach reflects different educational models at different times. Think about the suggestions and comparisons at the beginning of this section. See how or if they are evident in an actual classroom.

While observing classes, consider the following, and jot down notes on these and any other points which interest you.

Pre-observation questions

I. **General observation:**

For about 15 minutes, observe the whole class:

1. Describe the activities: What is the lesson about?

2. How do the people interact?
   a. Who talks most?
   b. Who listens?
   c. Do the students work cooperatively? independently? both?

3. Specific patterns of interaction:
   a. Where is the attention focused? (teacher, learners, materials, activities?)
   b. How does the teacher interact with the learners? (formally, casually, affirmation verbally/affirmation by touch, focusing on active students/focusing on quiet students/ working for balance, etc.)

notes

I. General observation:

II. **Focus on one learner** involved in verbal interaction for at least 15 minutes. Note as much information as you can about the learner's interaction, and include, if you'd like, the following points:

1. Interaction (see 2c, 3b, above)
2. What do you think this learner's needs are?

III. **Post-observation questions**:

1. Your general impression
   a. Would you be comfortable as a learner in this class? Why? Why not?
   b. Would you be comfortable as a teacher in this class? Why? Why not?
2. The lesson
   a. What were the teacher's objectives? What goals do you feel the activities were designed to meet?
   Consider these factors:
   linguistic (language);
   paralinguistic (gestures, body language);
   metalinguistic (talk about language);
   survival, affect, thought, culture
   think about the relationship between anguage and its cultural content.
   b. How did the teacher evaluate learners' progress during the lesson? Do learners evaluate their own progress?
   c. Based on your perception of the learners' observed/observable needs, what would your next step/lesson be with this class?

How would you characterize the learning model in the class you observed? Would you say it was more learner-centered or more teacher-centered, or someplace in between? Were you surprised at anything you saw?

notes

II. Focus on one learner:

III. Post-observation questions:

other thoughts

summary

A collaborative approach to adult education encourages learners to draw on themselves and each other in finding ways to solve particular problems. They work together to find new information to gain new learning. The tutor often deflects learners' questions back to other learners. (If someone asks a tutor how to spell a particular word, for example, the tutor might then ask other learners if they know how that word is spelled).

Sometimes a collaborative approach includes the use of codes and the problem-posing process explained above. A collaborative approach fosters cooperative learning among students and a constant awareness on the part of the tutor and learners that the learning process is one in which everyone has something to contribute to the rest of the group.

The Adult Academy advocates a range of models and approaches. We have attempted to illustrate these ideas through the activities and approaches detailed in this handbook. Through your continued participation in workshops, and continued reflection on and discussion of the handbook, you will come to find approaches to adult literacy learning that work best for you and your learners.

In the next section, *getting started,* you'll read more about adult learners and literacy education.

for further reading

learner centered practice

Two overriding assumptions shape learner centered practice: Literacy exists within a socio-cultural context, and classroom content is driven by learners' needs. Classroom organization breaks out into two broad strands: **recurring events** (such as generation of weekly classroom news, journal writing, and other language experience activities pertaining to regular, ongoing events [week-end, workday, etc.]) from which **themes** evolve. Learner activity, needs and concerns dictate content. These organizational strands provide a framework within which content finds structure and form, in the larger framework created by learners' goals.

Literacy facilitators in England delineate various aspects of student participation in adult basic education (ABE) programs, [1] and examine the various components of (student-centered) literacy practice, including access, assessment, environment and the points of view of students, tutors and organizers. They call attention to the importance of students initiating various parts of their study process and the need for facilitators to aim "to be treated as a resource in someone's learning program - to be made use of, then discarded when no longer needed. We should be aiming to make people ultimately independent of us, rather than the opposite." (p. 1). As students learn how to learn, they gain access to additional/alternate ways of coming to gain the skills and knowledge they need; as they gain independent learning strategies, their learning options and opportunities increase.

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[1] Student Participation: Some of the features of the A.B.E. model as developed in a number of centres over a number of years. (no author, no date. Received, 6/89). ALBSU: The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, Kingsbourne House, 229/231 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7DA, England.

Carmen St. John Hunter[1] points out that in learner centered education each situation will demand a particular set of events and activities to occur in order to meet learners' needs in a given context. Alison Murphy [2] recounts the development of literacy curricula negotiated by learners to meet their needs as members of a tenants' association. Their involvement in community action generated and shaped literacy work needed within the scope of the tenants' campaign. In organizing to improve access to housing, learners needed to read and writing a variety of things; they "used [literacy] immediately in a practical context". A narrow definition of literacy can be inflicted upon learners by well-meaning but under-prepared volunteers and tutors; The idea that there are many literacies requires an examination of learners' views of what literacy is and does. Francis Kazemek speaks of differences between learners' and tutors' notions of literacy. An understanding of these frames of reference is critical to the development of student centered learning. How do literate people view and interact with the world differently from those who are not literate, and by extension, how do literate people view opportunities for education in literacy differently from those who are not literate?

Learners' first experiences with many educational programs occur upon their arrival into the program, when they participate in intake interviews and testing and assessment processes. The role of assessment is shifting and becoming more explicitly learner centered. Wallerstein points out that a true needs assessment is "not completed before the first day of class, nor is the listening done by the teacher alone. As content is drawn from learners' daily lives, listening becomes an ongoing process involving both teachers and students as co-learners and co-explorers." [3]. Susan Lytle and others at the University of Pennsylvania describe the importance of

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[1] ACBE, p. 158.

[2] Murphy, A. (1987). Is student centered learning a form of tokenism? *Viewpoints* , No. 7, p. 23.

[3] Wallerstein, in ACBE, p. 21.

learners' roles in the assessment process; Lenore Balliro at the Adult Literacy Resource Institute has done extensive work on assessment, particularly for non-native speakers of English in a learner-centered context.

Generally, research studies point to many possibilities within all aspects of literacy learning for inclusion of student input; the amount and degree of such inclusion varies as well. Practitioners need to gain awareness of the fact that their very practice, although drawing on student input to some extent, still perpetuates a power base: the teacher knows how and what s/he will have the class do; the learners then do it. "It is too much of one person knowing what the other would like to know and keeping it that way." [4] Murphy suggests that practitioners make their methodologies known to learners. She cites Robert Merry's speculation that "many tutors may not (make methodologies available to students) because they themselves do not fully understand what they are doing" (p. 24).

There have been few opportunities to clarify our own thinking. Consequently we have not been able to make our assumptions explicit, to share them with students or to elicit students' understandings of these relationships and processes. Until we do this it is difficult to envisage how we can respond adequately to students' perceptions that there are things about language and how it works that they need to know but that we are unwilling to share. *Murphy, p. 24.*

Educators at the Independent Learning Project at Morley College found that the most meaningful way in which learners could take control of their learning was to engage in "discussion about what learning is; setting goals and assessing progress; sharing knowledge about the strategies and techniques we use; and exploring areas which may be unfamiliar to many tutors and students" (ibid). They found that one result of demystifying the teaching process may be that practitioners find ways in

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[4] Gardner, qtd. in Murphy, p. 24.

which to include learners in that process -- as peer teachers, as part of a teacher education team, etc.

Alison Murphy defines student-centered learning "to mean collaborative learning which validates students' skills, experience and potential and is directed according to students' choices and purposes. This approach enables students to take responsibility for their own learning in which tutors[5] act as facilitators and a resource" (p. 23). Simply put, the material that learners study must relate to their needs, lives and interests, and the methods used to help them learn must be designed for adult learners, with prior experience in the world. Readers will have their own definitions of student-centered learning, and of literacy and literacies. It is our purpose to encourage reflection on the issues raised, which we hope will lead to further reading, research and ongoing dialogue.

[5] A tutor is a teacher/facilitator in the UK, and the term does not have the connotation of 'volunteer tutor' that it has in the US. Volunteer tutors in the UK are referred to as volunteers.

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getting started

*In this section we explain the **rationale** behind a learner-centered approach to adult literacy learning. We discuss some basic tools you will find useful in teaching adults to develop and improve their reading and writing skills. Later, we suggest **activities** and **materials** to use with specific **topics** such as family, housing, work and transportation. Finally, we have included a sample curriculum and lesson plan which you may use as guides for your own work.*

Literacy facilitators often combine different approaches, and find themselves adapting and expanding activities to meet the needs of their learners. Facilitators pull these elements together in a literacy learning context. For our purposes, *method* describes a way in which something is done. *Approach* is the larger umbrella under which various methods may be loosely framed together. Some practitioners label the what and the how of instruction/ implementation as *techniques*, which might be particular ways of doing things in the classroom to move learners towards their literacy goals.

rationale: why?

It is important to ask what teaching is and maybe what it isn't, when we think about teaching practice and assumptions implicit in the approaches teachers employ. Maybe teaching is a process of learning from: at times, people are self-taught, at other times they learn from others, constructing knowledge jointly.

Frameworks have been suggested for examining 'good' practice, as distinguished from 'bad' practice. Top-down is contrasted against bottom up; top-down represents the 'banking' approach to education where learners are viewed as empty vessels in which knowledge is deposited, bottom-up describes learners constructing their own learning programs. Competency-based is pitted against participatory learning. Competency-based education lists objectives (such as "learner will be able to write name, address and phone number"), as measurable skills which are taught as competencies. Skill-centered learning (where topics are organized by various reading/writing/ language skills) is viewed against a meaning-based approach, and so on.

Clearly, there is no one best method by which learning occurs. The Adult Academy is committed to a participatory, learner-centered approach to literacy learning. Needs and concerns of learners are primary; dialogue about their interests and goals forms the curriculum.

A number of factors influence the learning process. Both learners and facilitators are active participants in this process. Their age, gender, previous educational experience, health and mental health, vision, hearing, learning style, expectations, orientation (visual, aural, tactile), immediate life situations, past/recent changes/ transitions all affect the interaction. Now factor in the consideration that each class or tutoring group will consist of learners whose backgrounds, learning styles, preferences, etc., will vary widely, and it seems unlikely that one teaching approach can be satisfactory for all. One single approach won't work for all people. You will see as you read this manual and continue through workshops with the Adult Academy, that we ecourage tutors to develop a variety of techniques which can be mixed and matched in each class and activity.

Teaching practice has to do with an understanding of the complexities of the individual participants involved in the learning process, and also of the different processes that emerge through the interaction of learners with each other and with their teacher or facilitator. Building knowledge in a group/social setting is a powerful thing -- one which can be hoped for, but rarely planned for in a precise way. A willing teacher begins to realize that his or her role is that of facilitator as she attempts to guide learners to their own knowledge, sharing that knowledge with that of others and finally moving towards advancement of knowing for all.

In some settings, non English speaking learners want to become literate first in their own languages, and native language literacy classes are available to them. In other settings, where non-native speakers of English are learning literacy, learners may use their native language in many ways to access literacy in English and to find their voices in their native language. ('Finding voices' describes the process of learning to express oneself in another language, and/or in writing).

Learners may use their native languages orally with each other and in writings for clarification, for expression, for practice and for communication. Learners can and do determine ways in which they need to learn. For some this includes using the native language -- either for *transliteration* (writing out the sounds of a word in English in the native language) or for *translation*, as a means through which to approach writing in English. It is important to observe and respect the strategies learners find helpful. It is also important to encourage learners to find their own strategies and strengthen them.

getting organized

A curriculum is a guide for planning a course of instruction and organizing content -- topics, themes and/or grammatical items, depending on one's focus. There are many ways of setting up curricula, but few are realistic in their view of the ways an adult learner's world operates. Some literacy curricula integrate grammar and language usage, others focus on communicative activities, others imagine ideal learners in ideal settings and provide model dialogues. Certain models reflect an unrealistic view of the way in which things occur in the world (particularly within the context of adult education).

curriculum guidelines

The purpose of any curriculum is to guide the teacher through a scope and sequence of learning events and activities, the goals of which are to lead learners to the accomplishment of some measurable outcome(s). Outcomes typically include increased knowledge and ability which can be demonstrated by the learner and measured by the teacher.

Factors which affect curriculum implementation include: class size, multiple skill levels, and the presence or absence of multi-cultural and multi-lingual learners. These factors are tied to the organizing function of curriculum.

For example, a tutor might not need to cover very basic information to be covered under the topic of housing if none of the learners have questions or concerns around that topic. On the other hand, if one learner wants to know about complaining about a landlord, the tutor might engage all the learners in a discussion about their experience with their landlords.

A teacher will organize and 'cover' various parts of a curriculum by paying attention to the learners' prior experience and knowledge of the world. The tutor will work on component skills and drills (spelling, reading/writing activity) in a meaningful way, but using the topic of housing as the context in which the exercises are framed. The suggestions later on in this section provide other examples of ways to include learners needs within numerous topics.

Several existing literacy and literacy/ESL curricula can be found in the Academy's resource library. Because of the particular needs of Academy learners, and the Academy's commitment to learner-centered instruction, this section is intended as a guide to curriculum development.

curriculum and the learner

Participatory educators value the importance of community among learners so that their concerns can be clearly voiced and shared. Subsequent language and literacy work can be developed around learners' issues and concerns.

Nina Wallerstein describes community literacy as "an educational process which takes curriculum from community and student needs and, through dialogue and co-education, suggests changes back to the community".* This process is most commonly known as one of problem-posing (as opposed to problem solving).

Many pre-set curricula use **topics** as organizing devices (usually these topics fall under the umbrella of life skills) and 'teach' literacy within the context of personal information, shopping, transportation, health, etc. In a learner-centered classroom topics are generated by learners. The process of dialogue and co-education occurs jointly among learners and facilitator[s]; a problem-posing approach is implemented around topics of interest and importance to learners.

Cross topics (topics which are applicable to a number of situaions and fall under numerous headings) such as time, money or clarification, can be taught separately and/or in contexts such as banking, transportation or work. Within the scope of ESL/literacy, a cross topic such as *time* might appear within numeracy work, within document reading and writing, as well as within a discussion of work, eating, sleeping and/or leisure habits.

A cross topic, as such, represents language/literacy useful in more than one specific context. Housing, for example -- a specific topic -- might embrace the cross topics of seeking clarification (the rent is how much?); numeracy ($500); document literacy (lease, house/ building rules) and money (check? cash? money order?).

* Language and Culture in Conflict, ©1984, Addison-Wesley, p. 10. This book is in the Adult Academy library. It contains many sample lesson plans.

curriculum and the learner

Participatory educators advocate connecting any mandated topics to the wider framework of a problem-posing approach in order to connect learners' knowledge and experience to the topics (or grammatical items, etc.) at hand.

A curriculum **cannot** be predetermined. Given the multiple needs of learners and the often restrictive focus of many pre-set curricula, lesson planning and curriculum development are inter-related. The curriculum is a guide to the learning process. The facilitator guides learners through various language and literacy events and activities derived from learner-generated content. As such, curriculum is a guide to developing and expanding the process of organizing a body of study to which learners actively and consistently contribute, and with which they interact.

curriculum and the learner

Curriculum guidelines reflect a processive, learner-centered approach to curriculum and materials development. Tutors organize class time around **recurrent events** (conversations, dialogue journal writing, language experience activity). **Content** (themes and topics) emerges through these events and generates further activity.

recurrent events

Recurrent events are regular repeated activities which allow learners to generate writing. This writing can later be expanded into different kinds of reading materials. These materials might then be further expanded or adapted into more reading and writing matter. Often, the materials will help generate new topics of discussion and new writing. Learner activities, needs and concerns dictate content.

Recurrent events include dialogue journal writing, generating language experience stories at the beginning of class as learners relate events/information occurring prior to class that day (which often overlap with themes and topics).

Additionally, smaller, repetitive events, such as the writing of the date or the weather report ("Today it's cold"), at the beginning of each class serve to encourage learners to take preliminary steps towards independent writing and reading within a relatively controlled (i.e., limited) range of vocabulary and within a safe and supportive learning environment.

themes and topics

Tutors and teachers organize literacy activity around themes and topics according to learners' needs, interests and concerns. These themes and topics generally emerge during conversations held at the beginning of class sessions. Such conversations frequently raise questions or issues that learners wish to discuss or to know more about. The facilitator generally invites learners to share whatever they might know about a topic at hand and often engages learners in some writing about that topic.

Through the use of language experience, tutors and learners organize collective knowledge into a story or paragraph. This story becomes the first reading material on that topic. Depending on the extent of learners' interest in the topic and/or the availability of other appropriate/relevant materials, 'authentic' texts and/or further reading materials may be used to extend or expand the topic at hand.

Additionally, tutors or teachers will generally type up the class writing, reproduce it, and distribute it at the following session. This practice provides additional interaction with the learner-generated writing. Using learner-generated writing also validates the learners' contribution to the body of reading material used by the group. The facilitator often adds open-ended questions to the sheet on which a writing appears, thereby extending learners' interaction with both content and additional writing and reading.

The themes listed are often of interest to learners -- although not to all. Attention to learners' concerns, elicited during a few minutes or more of (warm up) conversation at the beginning of the class session, may reveal particular questions, concerns or interests.

typical topics

Themes tend to follow in a similar pattern among learners universally.[1] The progression of topics seems to work best when it begins with the learner him or herself and grows outward to family, neighborhood, classroom, community, workplace, etc.

What follows are some typical and/or predictable topics and possible questions to ask or directions to pursue. **In every instance, the learners' knowledge is a good place to start:** What knowledge and experience do they have of the topic at hand? What do they need to learn? What can they tell each other? How can they find information they don't have? What action might they want to take in pursuing information or changing a negative situation?

The suggested lesson plans that follow are intended as suggestions for tutors, as possible beginning points. Questions which might help elicit information from learners are listed below. The list of brainstormed ideas and questions that appears here may or may not be of use to your particular learners.

The **process** of creating and asking their own questions **is central** to (integral to and inseparable from) the entire process through which language and writing are generated. Too much of traditional schooling is about other people identifying problems and then asking learners to solve them. For adult learners, especially, it is critical to recognize and encourage their identification of issues of importance.[2]

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[1] Gary Pharness, MLA: Responsibilities for Literacy, Pittsburgh, September, 1990.

[2] "Textbooks and tests do not, with rare exceptions, ask students to identify problems; instead, they ask students to *solve* problems already identified and stated by others." Heath, in Lunsford, Moglen and Slevin (eds.). (1990).*The Right to Literacy*. p. 293.

family / leisure

If asked, many learners will bring in photographs of family members, events or trips to class to share with classmates. Learners will naturally want to talk about the photos.

Initially, you can guide the discussion by posing questions and trying to elicit information from the learners who brought in photos. As learners come to know each other, they will take on more of the interaction. From the discussion, language experience approach (LEA) writing develops. Again, you can initially model ways to shape the discussion into writing. As learners gain confidence they will begin acting as scribes for each other -- transferring oral to written language. Additionally, you might bring in magazine or other photos/illustrations depicting different families engaged in different activities. You can invite comment, questions, contrast and comparison between and among learners' ideas of family and those in the visual images.

You can develop generative questions around the idea of family, including:

- what is a family? ; how do family expectations affect our lives?
- who do you consider a family member?
- what are the roles of significant others, community people, friends and neighbors in your lives?

useful texts / materials *

Voices Expressions learners' family photos
Starting to Read Personal Stories Remembering
Double Action Picture Cards In Print
Picture Stories Lexicarry
Language and Culture in Conflict

*materials listed in this section are available in the Adult Academy library.

house / home

- Where do you live? Can you make a map of the routes from home to class?

- Who rents? Who owns? Who found the place you live in now?

- What can learners tell each other about owning and renting?

- What problems have you had? Are you familiar with US cultures and customary ways of doing things?

- How do language and literacy impact on your home lives?

- Which learners can advise others about a particular aspect of housing based on their previous experience?

- Might learners want to discuss, write and/or read about:
-- moving -- borrowing/renting a truck or van; ---- activities in the home -- who does what? (overlap with family/ roles);
-- furniture -- new, used (may overlap or connect with shopping); ---- problems with the landlord/repairs; neighborhood

- What about homelessness? Why are people homeless? Who are the homeless? What has the government done to help? What would happen to homeless people in learners' home countries?

useful texts / materials

photos of learners' homes/ magazine photos
real-life print (for sale/for rent signs, newspaper ads)
Starting to Read — In Print
A New Start — The New Arrival
Language and Culture in Conflict
Look Again Pictures for Language Development and Life Skills

cars and transportation

How do you get to school? Is driving a car in this country very different than in your countries/community of origin?

- What about public transportation? What are the costs, availability, convenience, schedules? Are there rules of conduct (such as not eating, spitting, smoking) on public buses in their communities/countries?

- Do people commonly hitchhike?

- Are symbols and road signs used in the same manner in other parts of the world?

- What about parking bans, parking meters, alternate side/ overnight parking?

Might learners want to discuss/read/write about:
-- obtaining learning permits and drivers' licenses, driving lessons,rules of the road;
-- buying a car: new? used? mileage, body work, able to pass inspection, etc.
-- insurance, accidents/problems.

useful texts / materials

Lifeskills 1 LEA
road signs/ graphics drivers' manuals
newspapers and magazines (photos, buy/sell ads)
Look Again Pictures for Language Development and Life Skills

work

Who are the learners? Who is employed? If your learners are a group of elderly widows, would jobs be an issue?

- In a group where only some people have jobs, is it important to validate the worth of work in the home?

- Have they worked before? Have they any interest in working in this country? Changing jobs?

- What are the cultural attitudes among learners vis-a-vis work? Are there issues with documentation and 'legality'? Are people exploited in their places of work?

- What's minimum wage and who earns it? Is there equal work for equal pay?

- What are contrasts between work here and in other countries?

- Do they want to learn more about salaries, benefits, upgrading?

- What about being laid-off or being fired? How do people deal with conflict at the workplace?

- Do learners want to discuss and write about positive and negative aspects of their jobs, or jobs they might like to have?

useful texts / materials

LEA print realia/information from the worksite
pay stubs want ads application forms / social security cards
proof of authorization to work
ESL for Action: Problem Posing at Work
Let's Work Safely Speaking Up at Work
In Print Picture Stories First Words
Voices Expressions Remembering

family: intergenerational issues / conflict
gender: changes in roles / expectations

- Who do you live with? Who lives in your house/apartment?

- Who do you consider family? What are differences between family, friends, in-laws, blood relatives, and distant family?

- How do American families change and grow? Do you see your family as an American family? How is it different?

- What is appropriate childcare? Who takes care of whose children?

- Who does what jobs in the family? Who earns money? Who does housework? Who shops? Who cooks?

- How is marriage different in different countries, communities, sub-cultures? What are different major life events?

- Is everybody's family the same? How are they different? Why?

useful texts / materials

LEA school report cards teen magazines
In Print The New Arrival
Language and Culture in Conflict Picture Stories
Double Action Picture Cards Personal Stories

Finally, none of these suggestions or questions will be of any use at all if they are asked or considered in isolation from learners' goals and reasons for wanting to study. As tutors continue to work with adult literacy learners, they try to find better means through which to include learners' explicit participation in the development of curriculum, in assessing their own progress and in deciding what is actually studied.

sample lesson plan

Looking at the questions we posed about family on page 15, we will discuss some basic ideas for developing a lesson plan.

A first step is to find a way to learn about students' interest in and knowledge of the subject.

At the beginning of the class, you can start an informal discussion using these questions. This discussion will reveal some information about learners' knowledge of vocabulary words in English. If you begin to write some of the questions and their responses on the blackboard or on newsprint pads, you will also start to uncover information about their ability to read and pronounce the vocabulary.

- Who do you live with? Who lives in your house? Who is in your family?

As learners discuss the people in their households, the tutor can write their responses on the board/newsprint;

wife	cousin
daughters	father-in-law
sons	nieces
brothers	sisters

There is so much vocabulary around family - or any subject matter, really - that you are almost certain to come across unknown words with any group of learners. You may also be able to develop some interesting cross-cultural discussion about who is considered family among your own and the learners' cultures.* You can use words from the list, and generate new questions with the learners:

Do you live with all the people in your family?

Where do the people in your family live?

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

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* You will note that much of this section focuses on cross-cultural questions. These questions are not limited to ESL learners. Even learners who were born in the US come from many different sub-cultures, and can learn from each others' experiences.

A word of caution: some of these questions might be difficult for learners whose families have been divided by immigration, or lost through war in the home country. Therefore, you might want to stop after the first question, (Who lives in your house?) and develop vocabulary and writing around that question, and around other information learners might volunteer about their families. With a group of learners who know one another well, dealing with difficult questions may be a very supportive activity. This is a question of judgement.

After learners have discussed their families, you can work with them to generate a language experience paragraph such as:

There are [how many] people in my house. I live with _____

_____.

Our apartment/house has [how many] rooms.

You can develop a grid based on the learners' information (see **approaches and activities**) and generate sentences about:

-- who has children
-- who has children in school
-- who lives with whom
-- who has family living nearby; whose family lives in/outside the US

Depending on learners' interest in the topic, you might ask them some or all of the following questions.

- How do you think American families change and grow? How do you think American families are similar/different from families in your country?

- What is good childcare? Do Americans have different ideas? How do you know? Who takes care of whose children?

- Who works in the family? Who cooks? Who does housework?

- How does marriage work in your country? Is it the same here? What are the most important birthdays?

- How are families different between learners in the group?

Use the blackboard or newsprint to note the group's responses, and then develop word lists and groupings (see below), language experience stories, flashcards, sentence strips and even bingo activities. With some creativity, there are any number of directions you can take, depending on the interests and skills of your group of learners.

For example, learners might want to discuss marriage customs. They might tell each other about marriage customs in their countries/communities, and ask about or report on weddings they've attended. You can broaden the whole group's vocabulary by listing the words they use, and add one or two of your own:

party	flowers	cake
bride	sewing	money
groom	cooking	family
presents	temple	church

If you know some letters are hard to pronounce, or to distinguish from other letters, ask learners to group all the words together using these letters (e.g., all the words that begin with the letter **c**):

cooking cake church

or all the words that list people:

bride groom family

or the words that list verbs/doing things:

cooking sewing

The grouping you choose depends on the interests and needs of the learners you are working with. You can expand on this activity by encouraging learners to develop sentences using the words, or do a new group language experience story around the words. How far you go really depends on the interests and abilities of learners.

You can also encourage learners to bring in photos of family members and events; you, too, can share your own photos with the group.

If you are an active listener, and follow the lead of your learners, you will find that many discussion topics can go on for a long time. It is a good idea to keep your language experience stories, grids, and word lists in a newsprint pad so that you can bring them home at the end of the session. You can type up the class materials, and copy them for the next session. This approach ensures regular, weekly review of any material covered. It is reaffirming to learners to see that they can generate their own learning materials.

As a tutor, it is your responsibility to focus and structure your tutoring sessions. You also need ensure that activities and materials stem from the learners. You may want to break up your sessions into half hour blocks where you have specific activities to work on. For example:

Topic:	**Family**
5:50-6:00	Come early, discuss plan with teacher (if applicable)
6:00 - 6:30	Discuss families. Generate vocabulary, two stories. Practice reading stories together. Cover grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.
6:30-7:00	Pair off and work on specific skills with LEA stories.
	*** break ***
7:10-7:30	Discuss specific differences between families in group. Look for new vocabulary, new LEA stories.
7:30-8:00	Guided or open-ended writing based on family.

It is important to balance meaningful content with a variety of activities to practice real language (in oral and written forms).

In multi-level groups, more advanced learners might write stories on the topic; others might work on basic word identification and sentence exercises with the stories. Sometimes learners can work in pairs -- reading and writing about the topic at hand. The manual section on **approaches and activities** lists numerous ways through which learners can work on reading and writing skills and tasks.

Sample Curriculum

Week	Goals	Activities	Content Areas
1	*learning about each other *setting tone *assessment: level/needs	name games, grids pair & group interviews dialogue journals set regular literacy activities (i.e. discuss/write: how was your day?)	personal information (name, address, country/community)
2	*learning about each other *looking for content areas *setting goals	language experience stories interviews/grids dialogue journals regular activities	personal information family, work, neighborhood, coming to US
3 - 4	*choosing content areas *building skills & vocab. *learning about each other	reading based on class information grids and stories language experience stories dialogue journals regular activities	Sample Content Areas: Entertainment Work/Unemployment Community Resources Shopping: food, clothes Money Neighborhoods School & Kids Home Country Doctor/Body/Health Reading Newspapers
5 - 7	*building skills & vocab. *choose new content areas *sharing info. and resources		
	*evaluation	inter-group interviews: past materials informal tests: past material (learners choose areas for test based on past goals)	
8 - 13	repeat week 3-7	gather material for group book xerox during week, staple in class	
14	*review	read learners' book - celebrate!!	

Tatlock/Gross/91

for further reading: considerations influencing curriculum

learning styles

How do you learn a language? How do you learn new things -- like setting up a computer, driving a standard car, using a fax machine, filling out tax forms? Do you prefer to read instructions, to have them read to you? Do you prefer to learn by yourself, making mistakes and troubleshooting as you go?

Understanding your own styles and preferences is key to considering the range of styles and preferences among learners.

American education tends to be very competitive. Individual work and achievement are valued greatly. Group work is only a means toward an end in many American schools.

Among many other cultures, however, learning and doing cooperatively is both means and end -- a way in which to accomplish a task that would be unthinkable to do alone. For many of our learners, reading and writing does happen collaboratively. It is important to understand how group support sustains learners.

Through attentive listening and observation we can learn how each individual learner interacts with print and language. We don't always need to see an individual 'product' (a written dictation, a worksheet, some homework) in order to understand how a learner accomplished what s/he did. We can see who turns to whom, who looks in their notebook or at posters or print in the room in order to find a needed word.

There are many questions to consider. Who sits with whom? How does a learner respond to your request that she read a passage to you alone? That she read to the others? We need to understand the difference between learning/reading and performance.

Part of <u>our</u> education was about displaying what we knew, showing the teacher we were paying attention by raising our hands and always filling in every answer on test forms -- even if we were guessing. For our learners, display may be frightening or it may be irrelevant. Therefore, we need to understand our own learning/ educational background in terms of the contexts in which it occurred and know that it may well be quite different from the learning needs and styles of our learners.

"but they want a book. but they want grammar"

Learner-centered practice demands beginning where the learners are, and working with them in order to help them meet *their* goals. Moving them away from less socially meaningful interaction with workbooks towards more personally relevant material is possible without neglecting grammar and vocabulary as aspects of learning.

Some commercial texts have been useful to literacy learners, with a tutor, or at home, sometimes with assistance from household or family members. Some learners appreciate bilingual grammar books; they can work with each other on various tasks in the text. Afterwards, they can work with a facilitator, generating language experience stories in English.

Tutors can develop worksheets to address grammar items learners need and want to learn, and can use exercises from grammar books, too. The issues are **meaning and context.** Tutors need to make the material useful for learners, and helping them move along whatever educational continuum they've established for themselves.

If adult learners intend to pursue a high school equivalency diploma, they'll need to be able to negotiate school-like literacy tasks. However, working toward the accomplishment of those tasks need not be alienating in either form or content.

Again, learners come to us with a wide range of previous experiences with schooling and with a number of goals. The space between grammar and rote learning and personally relevant content may not be so wide as some educators make it out to be. The way tutors convert content into form is part of helping learners move within the frameworks <u>they</u> want as they broaden the frameworks within which they can successfully learn. In other words, learners can move from rote text learning to more meaningful interaction with print as they find more interesting things to read and write while moving away from the security of rote but relatively meaningless drills.

"but it's easy for you to teach, you are so outgoing"

Everyone works differently, and personality does affect teaching style. What works well for one teacher may not work at all for another.

An extroverted teacher may keep her students entertained but is she listening to them and responding reflectively with work that will help them? Is the introverted teacher so afraid of making mistakes that she assigns worksheets all the time, so that learners go through a tightly sequenced program? Is the content of that sequence of use to learners?

As we each continue to explore learners' goals and our own responsibilities in negotiating curricula and methodologies in order to help learners meet those goals, our views and our approaches may change accordingly. Whoever the teacher is -- whatever her personality, teaching style, approach -- her focus is on the needs of the learner.

ABE literacy approaches & techniques

Much of this section on ABE (Adult Basic Education) is derived from workshops designed by Sally Gabb, a literacy worker at the Adult Academy and elsewhere. In it, we provide an overview of learners' experiences and goals, ways in which to relate basic life skills to print , and we suggest some specific approaches and activities to use with ABE literacy learners.

Although there are many similarities between adult learners who speak English as their first language, and those for whom English is not a native language, there are also some differences.

learners' experiences, learners' goals

Some native speakers of English have spent time in school, and may have had positive learning experiences cut short due to outside pressures. Others may have had less encouraging experiences with schooling, and may feel a certain anxiety about returning to a school-like situation. Some may feel embarrassed about their literacy skills; others might feel very good about joining a learning group. In any case, these are adults who have had extensive experience in the world. Many have developed numerous coping strategies for working around literacy-related tasks which they may not have been able to do for themselves.

Many ABE learners' want to complete the GED -- (General Equivalency Diploma) -- the high school diploma. For some, this is a long term goal, and their work in learning centers and/or classes is a process of preparation for taking the tests that lead to the GED. Others may want to improve reading and writing skills for their own purposes, or for work-related reasons.

Regardless of learners' individual goals, the approaches here advocate that tutors learn from the learners, and give constant feedback. Find out what they know, how they came to know it, what they want to know and learn, and keep them aware of how they are progressing.

relating basic life skills to print knowledge

A large part of the process is making learners consciously aware of what it is they're doing and how they're doing it. Talking about how a learner reads, for example, -- where s/he gets stuck, how s/he puts together meaning from words in print -- is part of helping him/her learn about how s/he learns. Talking with learners as they deal with the GED's multiple choice tests and logic exercises helps learners to learn about how they actually do put information together and learn new things.

Although specific activities and materials will differ with different learners, (ABE or GED), the underlying assumption is that learners can already do many things. Tutors help learners bridge the gap between what they already know and what they want to learn.

knowing and learning: integrating life experience with schooling

ABE learners may or may not expect to go on to GED instruction at some point. In general ABE courses, learners often need assistance with reading and writing assignments. They may want to brush up on certain skills, or learn new ones, in preparation for a return to the workplace. They may want to learn to use a computer, write a business letter, or 'just learn something'. Whatever their goals, learners need to be aware of their own existing abilities so that they can consciously build on them. They often take for granted the literacy tasks they can do; these abilities need to be brought to their attention. Encouragement to go further and take new steps is only half the struggle.

writing

Writing is a school-related task that seems to many to be completely unrelated to what we do in 'real life'. Many of us are afraid of, or uncomfortable with writing, and our learners often have these feelings, too. One way of helping them overcome those barriers is to encourage them to write frequently. We learn to write by writing, and there are many forms and purposes for writing.

freewriting

Freewriting is one way to begin the needed loosening up process so that learners can just get started and can get something down on paper. People often do freewriting before or after a discussion about a topic of interest. The process is simple: when it's time to write, a time limit is set (5 minutes is a good amount of time to start) and everyone writes (tutors and learners together) -- without stopping -- about the topic at hand.

Because there's no stopping, no going back over the writing, no time to correct or re-word the writing, learner's expectations are already different from those they'd have if they were writing an essay to be turned in or graded. The tutor tells the learners that they won't have to share their writing if they don't want to. What's important here is the process of getting started -- of putting pen or pencil to paper, forming thoughts and writing down words.

Over time, learners may use freewriting as a means to work out ideas about concerns in their own lives, or to rough out initial ideas for academic essays. They might freewrite to warm up for other writing tasks, so that the task of writing itself becomes less mysterious and less frightening. They come to learn to talk through writing, (a process which is at the heart of much academic writing). They also learn to communicate their own feelings and opinions through writing as well. Freewriting is an important vehicle in bridging gaps between life experience and school-based learning.

Freewriting extends not only into academic essay writing, but can also branch out into more personal writing to the tutor in the dialogue journal. Dialogue journals are described at length in **approaches and activities**, and some aspects of dialogue journal writing are mentioned on the following page, specifically within the context of adult basic education.

Dialogue journals work from learners' existing strengths and knowledge. Dialogue journal writing provides a means for student-tutor written interaction and communication in a non-threatening, individualized manner. Learners write to their teacher or tutor, working from their own level of ability. The journal is a place in which anything can be discussed; the focus is on content, not on correct form.

Getting started: Learners are invited to write to their tutor in the dialogue journal. The learner can choose the topic(s) and determines the length of the writing The tutor responds to the writing by asking questions, reflecting upon content, contributing his/her own information or offering sympathy, congratulations, etc.

Errors and corrections: Explicit corrections are *not* made in the journal, but may be modeled in the tutor's responses. For example, in response to misspelled words, or incorrect grammar usage ("Yestidday I had went down-town"), the tutor models correct usage in his/her response ("When you went downtown yesterday, what did you do?"), and maintains his/her interest in the content of the writing. Some errors take time to change -- with or without explicit correction; the point of this exercise is to encourage learners to write and read for meaning and for communication.

Some learners explicitly ask for corrections; ways of correcting journal entries without inhibiting free communication include:
-- modeling correct usage in tutor's response;
-- underlining problem areas and asking learners to consider what the problems might be [verb tense, agreement, or spelling, etc.].
-- using one side of the page or notebook only for writing and using the facing side/page for corrections;
-- taking note of learners' problem areas and addressing those separately. In working out ways to individualize students' work, reading/writing problems that surface in the journal may facilitate organization of appropriate activities for individual, pair or small group work. In ABE classes, the journal provides not only an ongoing measure of the progression of learners' writing skills, but also encourages feedback about the course and the learners' work with the tutor, and with the learning experience overall.

knowing and learning for academic work: naming what you do

Preparation for academic work raises to a conscious level the kinds of thinking processes we go through in order to solve various kinds of word problems and academic exercises. A good deal of book-based/ academic work requires readers to separate fact, opinion and generalization. For many of us, this is an ongoing, unconscious process. We constantly make judgments about what's fact, what's fiction, what's opinion, what's a stereotype, etc. Our learners make those distinctions, too, in the course of their daily lives. What's different in an academic setting is that learners are being asked to make those judgements on the basis of information they receive in writing. For many learners, a first step is in asking: What does the text say? What do you know from what you've read?

word problems and other tasks

Our task as tutors is helping learners talk through the steps they take in order to solve word problems, answer comprehension questions, and make decisions about multiple-choice test items. Look at the logic exercise below, and try to work it out.

Pedro, Denise, Ray, Susan and Fred each have a favorite color. They each like a different color; no two like the same one. Who likes which color? (Colors are green, orange, blue, red & yellow).

1. Pedro's favorite color is not green.
2. Denise doesn't like red or orange.
3. Someone really likes red.
4. Susan's favorite color is yellow.
5. Ray hates blue.
6. Ray and Susan's favorite colors mix to make Fred's favorite.

This kind of exercise in logic and elimination utilizes particular thinking skills that many people may have, but are unaware of using. Using what you know to figure out what you don't know, you solve the problem.

Were you able to complete the exercise?* How did you do it? How might other people do it? It's not at all important that people approach the problem in the same way, but for those learners for whom this kind of problem is difficult it is very important that they learn to discuss the steps they take in order to solve it, so that when things break down we know where they already are, and can help to guide them to possible next steps. The steps involved in solving the problem need to be talked about aloud (a sort of 'think-aloud protocol'), in order to help make it clearer to learners for whom it is difficult.

critical thinking: from common sense to verbal logic

As you've seen in the exercise above, a good deal of academic work involves following a certain kind of logic. Clarifying the steps needed in order to work out a problem forms the bulk of the tutor's work. **Critical thinking** refers to the larger process of separating what can be true from what can't be true, and then stepping back a bit further and seeing how academic problems relate to real life problems, and how real life problems occur in larger social contexts.

The **hierarchy of thinking skills** in the box on the next page summarizes the thinking processes used in most problem solving activity. Knowing these skills well will help you support your learners as they gain awareness of their own thought process.

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* *(Pedro: blue; Denise: green; Ray: red; Susan: yellow; Fred: orange.)*

Hierarchy of thinking skills

(adapted from GED texts)

evaluation	does it all make sense?
synthesis	pulling together different information
analysis	separating information by its meaning
application	using information in new contexts
comprehension	taking meaning from information
memory	recalling information

Starting at the bottom, the six skills represent thinking processes used in solving a problem, (or fixing a leaking faucet, figuring out a pay check, filling out a form, etc.).

If, for example, *the problem is what to do to report a burglary to the police*, there are two processes. One, actually calling the police and two, knowing what to tell the police once they arrive. Both processes require the use of these skills:

memory, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and **evaluation**.

Now, to work toward solving the problem of reporting a burglary:

The first skill used is **memory**. It has to do with what you know or remember about a situation. You know that things were stolen, you try to remember what you had, and you know that to report the crime, you need to call the police.

Your **comprehension** of the problem, (understanding that you have to call the police if you ever hope to retrieve your things) allows you to complete the first two steps.

Next, you **apply** the information you have (what was stolen, when it was stolen, how you dial 911) and use that information to continue to get help.

Your **analysis** of what the information means (well, they might help and they might not, but if I don't call, I know they won't help) enables you to **synthesize** all this information together.

Finally, your **evaluation** tells you if it all make sense or not. (Well, they came after 90 minutes, they might find my things or they might not, but now I feel I've done what I can. Maybe I'll look around the neighborhood and see if the thief dropped anything).

Of course, word problems, and book-based tasks follow these steps a little differently, but the underlying idea is the same. You start with what you know, you try to build your understanding until you've figured out a solution -- to a life problem, to a comprehension exercise, etc.

putting it together: problem-posing & critical thinking skills in action

A problem-posing approach places this whole process of understanding into an even broader context, and asks why did someone rip me off anyway? Who needed my TV? Why did they come to my house? What can I do to change this situation? The problem posing approach is discussed in greater detail in the section on **models of education**. It remains an option that you and your learners may wish to pursue actively. Generally, most learning situations present multiple opportunities to engage in asking why, and to integrate life and school.

forming literacy/critical thinking patterns

Problem-posing is often useful when learners confront 'need to know' materials. These materials are written documents, letters, insurance forms, accident reports, government letters, etc., that learners encounter. Before trying to explain anything to the learners, it's important to ask what knowledge and understanding do the learners bring to the material already? What do they understand about the writing, and what do they want to know more about? How does a letter announcing an insurance company's raising its rates impact upon a particular learner? What are the larger issues behind the rising costs of insurance for everyone? Do learners want to talk about these issues?

When they are interested in exploring such problems, problem-posing (see **models of education**) provides a useful guide to facilitating those discussions. At other times, however, learners may prefer to get the important facts from a written document and may not wish to discuss those issues any further. Facilitators and tutors might try to raise learners' awareness of the larger issues surrounding such problems as paying for insurance, etc., but if learners choose not to pursue the discussion, their rights and needs must be respected.

Real life materials often provide a way into worksheets and other academic-based literacy materials, and vice versa. As you come to know your learners and their needs you'll start to balance the work you do with them around both academic and real life texts and materials.

The section on **approaches and activities** provides concrete ways to integrate literacy skills within particular topics, and the **materials** section suggests books and visual materials that may be useful.

During your tutoring sessions, you will find your own ways of helping learners tie their learning together: using critical thinking skills to talk through and solve problems; to develop literacy through meaningful content; and integrating specific skills (spelling, writing letters, reading aloud) to meet learners' needs and goals.

ESL literacy approaches and techniques

In this section we discuss some aspects of adult literacy learning for people who are learning English as their second language. We mention some basic activities you will find useful with ESL (English as a Second Language) learners, and look at ways of relating basic life skills and spoken language ability to print knowledge. Finally, for further reading, we look at some basic principles and conditions for language development.

ESL learners and their needs: a basic profile

Some ESL/literacy learners speak English fairly well, but need help with literacy skills. Others have less fluency in English, and need to develop all four language skills -- listening, speaking, reading and writing -- together. **Listening** and **reading** are ***receptive*** skills. You listen to someone else speak, you read something that has already been written. **Speaking** and **writing** are ***productive*** skills; they involve creating new language. Many learners develop their receptive skills more quickly than their productive skills. Developing productive skills can be much more time-consuming and intimidating.

two approaches

Total physical response (TPR) is an approach to language learning which allows learners to listen and respond to instructions before they produce spoken or written language, which helps develop receptive skills. (For more on TPR, see **approaches and activities**). Approaches such as the language experience approach (LEA) combine all four skills. As you continue tutoring, you'll see that LEA forms the basis of a great deal of learner-centered literacy activity.

Language Experience Approach – The language experience approach (LEA) is a basic means for generating language in oral and written forms. People adapt and use the approach in many ways.

what it is:
Essentially, LEA consists of listening to learners' spoken language, writing it down (transcribing it into written form), and using it as reading/teaching material.

The **rationale** is that learning to read has to do with connecting one's own knowledge of the world (i.e. experience) with print. Practiced readers use reading strategies such as inferring and predicting meaning based on their own experiences. Using reading material that comes from learners' experiences and their existing knowledge of spoken language helps develop these reading skills.

The content of language experience stories is already meaningful to learners. Meaningful content and context is not only more interesting to learners, it is easier to retain.

To illustrate, read this fragment and try to recollect it without looking back: *Pat put paper, peppers, potatoes and pots in planters to protect them.* Now read this: *Yesterday I went downtown buy shoes.* The example is exaggerated intentionally -- an emphasis only on phonics has little to do with meaningful content; a sentence describing a real event using high frequency words common and known to learners contains meaning and authentic vocabulary. Such a sentence forms a basis for generating writing that learners can and will want to read.

Work on **phonics** (sound/symbol correspondences) and grammar forms is embedded in the content of the language generated by learners. Teachers can focus on specific forms as they arise in the activity.

In its purest form, LEA is an exact encoding of learners' words. The learner tells his/her story, and the tutor (or other learners) writes that story exactly as s/he hears it. With beginners, one often needs to offer suggestions for connecting words in order to form a coherent story. After the story has been written, learners then use it as the basis for their reading material for that particular session.

how to use it:

LEA can be used with an individual learner in one on one tutoring, at a blackboard, or on a pad of paper in a group learning situation.

More than one learner can construct the story. One learner might begin to talk about something s/he remembers about their day, for example. Others might then contribute their recollections until a paragraph (or several paragraphs, with more advanced learners) has been written. The tutor then invites learners to read the paragraph (and might invite them to read every two or three sentences as the story is being written).

With very beginning learners the story might be just three or four short sentences, often with several mistakes. To start, tutors often need to ask a series of open-ended questions. An example: **Today I go work factory. Factory name Noel Stevens. Near El Inca restaurant. I operate machine press.** Once this story has been encoded, learners read it through several times, together and individually.

Although it may seem that hearing ten other people read the same passage would be tedious, learners remain engaged in the process -- watching, learning from and listening to others (and learning the pronunciation and rhythm of English); preparing themselves for the trip to the newsprint or blackboard to read. The tutor has a chance to observe who helps whom, who 'memorizes' a passage by perhaps reading one word while pointing to another, who wants to read first, who needs encouragement from peers, etc.

building literacy activity from LEA:

Once the story has been read, beginning level learners might spend a good amount of time copying it into their notebooks. The tutor might invite learners whose abilities to produce language (by speaking or writing) lag behind their abilities to understand it (through listening or reading) to go to the text and circle 'work' or all the words that begin with a particular letter.

For the next session the story can be typed and distributed to learners for review. Questions might be added; comprehension questions (is the factory near the restaurant?) may be useful for learners who want visible evidence of pencil/paper interaction, for whom learning occurs very gradually. Other open ended questions (Do you work in a factory? Do you like your work?) may generate yet another round of language experience writing.

but they don't speak English...

Beginning learners might start with photos or other visual images which they label and learn. Fran Filipek Collignon, at the International Institute of Rhode Island, suggests using self-adhesive photo albums in which learners save these images and writing. As they gain more written language, the photo albums reflect a shift from visual to written forms. The photos can be used initially for labelling purposes; later sentences and stories may be built from those pictures.

LEA can also be used to encourage learners to write by inviting them to each contribute one sentence to a general topic, such as: **Last week-end I . . .** Learners will each write one sentence about their weekend. Once learners have seen the process modeled a few times -- the tutor listens, asks clarification questions, suggests words when needed and then encodes them -- learners take over the work of scribing with and for each other.

correcting errors in spelling and grammar

It is important to remember that people learning a language will make mistakes as they learn. Learning a language is intimidating for many. Most learners learn English through testing their ideas about how this new language works. This is a scary process for many as it makes them feel like children. People will need to be aware of their mistakes, but not all of them all at once. Learners tend to learn correct form best through learning to spot their own mistakes. Tutors should encourage learners to look for mistakes, but refrain from pointing out more than one or two at a time unless asked.

Some tutors correct learners as tutors transcribe for them. ("Last week I go", becomes a question from the tutor: "You went?"). Others leave learners to transcribe for each other or transcribe the exact utterances, because these are the words learners know and use. As learners continue to gain facility with language they will correct each other.

LEA all by itself is a starting point. It is unfair to send learners out into the world with only a private language, (full of misspellings, or irregular grammar usage) which LEA can become. LEA is a bridge between learners' initial uses of oral and written language and the wider world of print that exists beyond the classroom. LEA is a piece of the process of moving from learners' spoken language to standard English usage.

relating basic life skills to print knowledge

Many of the topics, and much of the literacy activity you undertake with ESL learners starts from LEA. Survival ('life skills') topics, such as learning to write a money order or reading a telephone bill, can begin with simple group stories from learners. See the example on the following page.

Juan has a telephone.
Pedro has a telephone.
Maria has a telephone.
Sok has a telephone, too.
Juan's telephone bill was very big.
Juan wants to call the telephone company.

Notice the repetition of the word *telephone*. This story came from a small group of learners, each one writing his or her own name, or the name of a classmate.

Juan had a problem with his phone bill, and brought it to class. He gave the tutor permission to discuss the problem with the other learners. First, the tutor elicited this LEA. She worked with *telephone* as a high-frequency sight word, (a word that is seen often, and is a very commonly used word).

Later, she photocopied the bill (again, with Juan's permission), and the group worked on reading the bill, figuring out the due date, the charges, and trying to guess why the bill was so unreasonably high. Learners also brainstormed suggestions for Juan -- he should go to the phone company and complain about the bill; he should write a letter; he should ask an English speaking friend to call for him, etc. This kind of activity is a typical, real life application of the problem-posing approach.

building skills from content

A follow-up activity to the work on telephones and bills might be working from a survival skills basic text to bridge learners' knowledge of the topic to other written forms. In a later section of this manual, we will outline a number of these texts, but for now we will concentrate on one.

First Words is a useful beginning level literacy text that uses photos to illustrate key sight words. From First Words, learners might then go on to explore telephone/utility bills in other survival texts, or their interest in the topic might have passed. At any rate, LEA is an excellent initial activity. It allows learners to use the language they know, to learn to read and write words they know orally, and to then go on to more complex literacy work on a particular topic, or to go on to a new topic altogether.

using English

Because literacy activity does not exist in a vacuum, a familiarity with typical ESL methods is useful. Learners use written language in a context -- to understand instructions, to pay bills, to deal with their children's school, etc. Reading and writing are only half the skills needed to use English.

Communicative competence refers to a speaker's ability to know how and when to use the language they know for specific purposes. This ability applies to reading and writing as well as to listening and speaking.

As you read at the beginning of this section, communicative competence is an ability which develops over time. Just as a native speaker of English knows that there is one way to speak to a family member, another way to address an employer, and yet another way to speak to a telephone salesperson, ESL learners also have a sense of ways to address people within their native language and culture. They may not know, however, how to use English to meet different needs. They may not understand that a note to a teacher should probably not be written on the back of an envelope, or that a utility bill can be challenged.

Working with learners to ensure they achieve communicative competence is an overall goal. Specific objectives within that goal include helping learners develop language to meet their specific needs.

grammar

A traditional approach to ESL instruction is the **grammar/translation** method, which resembles the methods used to teach many of us French, Spanish or other foreign languages in high school. (English as a Foreign Language programs often rely on grammar/translation methods.) Our teachers used English as the language of instruction, and had us learn to conjugate verbs, learn vocabulary and grammar in the target language (the language we were learning).

This approach is not particularly effective for ESL learners, because ESL uses English (the target language) as the language of instruction for non-English speakers. The problem is that the learners cannot understand the information taught because they do not yet understand the language used for instruction. Grammar/translation talks *about* the target language but doesn't focus on real or immediate use of the language. Immigrants and refugees need to use English immediately, and therefore to focus on their communicative skills.

Advanced level learners might ask structural questions about English grammar and usage. The Adult Academy resource library has texts to help you help them in their learning. However, for the most part, a learner-centered approach which begins with the learners' words (LEA), is more useful. For learners with a strong interest in grammar, solid exercises can be developed from the LEA writings without sacrificing meaning for form.

survival topics

Learners identify their survival needs through the topics they discuss. It is the tutor's responsibility to generate meaningful discussion and listen carefully for topics of importance to learners.

For example, in the telephone story above, we learn that Juan has a problem with his phone bill and needs help. Other learners know about problems with bills, and offer him solutions. They don't need a whole unit on paying bills -- they already know how to do this.

Before embarking upon any survival skills unit (such as transportation, health, housing, banking, etc.), it's very important to find out what learners already know about the topic - and what they want to learn. Some may be homeowners who don't need to learn how to go about renting an apartment, but they might want help with tax forms. Others might might want to learn about how to buy a house for the first time. The more that tutors can tap learners' knowledge -- to help each other, to build discussion and writing -- the more meaningful and useful the language and literacy activity in the classroom will be.

more grammar, more context

We can also use Juan's story to build some grammar exercises. Using the form *name* has *object*, (Juan has a telephone) we can build other sentences using the third person singular (he/she/it) form of the verb to have, and can also reinforce the other forms:

I have	we have
you have	you have
he, she, it has	they have

Allowing this exercise to develop from the structures that learners already know strengthens their ability to absorb new learning about the verb.

This approach is very effective at helping people learn and remember new grammar information. People are able to learn the new information because it comes in a context that is already familiar and meaningful. To simply present the form of the verb to have in the present tense and conjugate it, without a context (such as who has a telephone), makes it more difficult to remember, and far less interesting to learners. It is crucial in ESL work always to build meaningful context.

for further reading

Language development: some principles and conditions.*

1. Language learners develop language skills by using the language.

Language develops through use.

Learners need opportunities to use language; they need people with whom to speak and listen, plus situations that promote active participation.
Learners are motivated to communicate.
Learning activities should promote participation, and should be social. Tutors need to be sensitive to learners' initial fears of making mistakes, and should not confuse a learner's initial period of silence in the classroom with that learner's lack of having anything to say.

2. Language practice should be functional and meaningful.

function, meaning, interaction

Classroom activities should provide learners with something real to say and a reason to say it.
Authentic language materials, and interaction with native speakers of English provide the most beneficial practice.
Classroom organization must allow for interaction; with other learners and with proficient and/or native speakers of English.

3. Language learning is improved when its focus is on doing things with the language rather than on the structure of the language itself.

focus on meaning

Speaking the language rather than speaking about the language helps people who are beginning to grapple with meaning and communicating in that language.

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* *These three pages are abridged and adapted from information in the Adult Academy's resource files. A source of the original information is unavailable.*

4. Language input must be understandable to the learner.

comprehensible language

Language meaning should be evident from the **context** in which it is used. This means using simple, direct communication, examples, and visuals.

Learners' background knowledge should be used; language about something the learner already knows (and has a **schema** for) is more comprehensible than language about unknown things.

5. Making mistakes is a normal, constructive part of language learning.

errors

The fact that a particular structure or word has been taught and learned does not necessarily mean that it can be consistently used correctly. It takes months and often years for learners to integrate and truly know many aspects of language and language use. Tutors should be sensitive to learners' needs; some learners actively seek correction, others may be discouraged or ashamed if corrected regularly. Allowing learners to complete what they're saying, asking for clarification, and **modeling** correct responses develops their willingness and ability to use language to communicate.

6. Language is learned best in an atmosphere of trust, acceptance, high expectations and support.

learning environment

In such an atmosphere, learners are willing to take risks learning and trying out language form, both of which are necessary for language development. Fear, anxiety and competitiveness make learning difficult. Dealing with these feelings prevents learners from attending to the language input/instruction they receive.

7. Listening, speaking, reading and writing strengthen and build on each other. The four language skills should not be taught separately, in isolation from one another.

The four language skills should be integrated in language learning.

language skills

Increased ability in one skill leads to increased ability in other skills. For example, developing speaking and writing skills do more to help reading comprehension than reading skill exercises alone.

8. Language develops in a cultural context; both the culture of the learners' first language and that of the language being learned influence the progress of language development.

language and culture

Factors such as the functions of oral and written language in the learners' culture and culturally familiar situations must be considered; they will influence development of the language being learned.

The culture of the target language (English) must be learned along with the language because it determines the meaning given to language in varying situations.

9. Socio-cultural factors such as the relationship of the learner's ethnic group to the target language ethnic group can influence language acquisition.

language status

The perceived relative status of the language learning group and the target language group may either help or limit second language learning. A minority group that perceives itself as being dominated by the majority group may have difficulty learning the majority language. Majority language speakers may not feel as motivated, on the other hand, to learn a language that is not prestigious.

A *subtractive* language situation, where the native language is being replaced by a majority language, such as English, is less conducive to language development than an *additive* language situation, where a second language is being learned not to replace the first language, but to be added to it.

10. Skills in the native language support development of a second language.

language interdependence

The more a learner understands about the workings of one language, the easier it is for him/her to grasp the workings of another. However, proficiency in the first language is only one of many factors determining the ease with which a learner will acquire another language.

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ABSTRACT

A model manufacturing training program was created for Oregon's precision metals industry. The program, a cooperative venture among private industry, education, and government, focused on two main goals: to train entry-level employees and to upgrade the skills of current employees in response to technological changes. The program at Clackamas Community College (Oregon) achieved the following goals: (1) development of curricula for one-year certificate and two-year associate programs; (2) design and implementation of a work-readiness assessment and training program; (3) provision of staff development and training for instructors; (4) establishment of a replicable model that could be used by other groups in metals manufacturing; (5) development of a recruitment package designed to attract adults and high school students with special emphasis given to minority populations and women; (6) offering of 36 classes for 200 students by summer 1991; and (7) filling of 100 job vacancies. The program, despite economic fluctuations, has met the main goals and serves as a model for similar projects. (NLA)

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Federal High Tech Cooperative Demonstration Grant

FINAL REPORT

October 1991

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Federal High Tech Cooperative Demonstration Grant

January 1990 - September 1991

GOALS:

The Federal High Tech Cooperative Demonstration Grant funded the creation of a model manufacturing training program for Oregon's precision metals industry. The program, a cooperative venture between private industry, education and government, focused on two main goals: (1) to train entry-level employees, and (2) to upgrade the skills of current employees in response to technological changes.

HISTORY:

As much as 30% of the current workforce is expected to reach retirement age within the next five years creating the need for a pool of skilled labor from which to replace these retiring employees. With the precision metals industry placing increased emphasis on computerized manufacturing techniques and equipment, the need to provide training in the operation of 'state of the art' equipment also exists. Upgrade training, particularly in the areas of computer usage and numerical control equipment operation, is critical to continued industry growth. The Oregon Precision Metal Fabricators Association and the Northwest Screw Machine Products Association were formed to address these needs.

Prior to the acquisition of the Federal High Tech Cooperative Demonstration Grant, Clackamas Community College formed partnerships with Oregon's precision metal fabricators and screw machine products industries and leased a training site in Wilsonville, Oregon. The community college made this centrally-located space available for technical training during the grant period. In turn, the precision metals industries agreed to provide the equipment needed for instruction. Prior to the grant some curriculum planning had taken place and a few evening courses were being offered. The grant provided an opportunity to significantly expand the curriculum, add basic skills components, target special groups such as women and minorities, and solidify the educational missions and opportunities of the two newly-formed trade associations.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES COMPLETED:

1. Develop curricula for one-year certificate and two-year associate degree programs.

With guidance from industry representatives, college staff developed competency-based curricula for nine-month certificate programs in the precision metal fabrication industry and the screw machine industry. All three instructors were recruited from industry and participated in the curricula development. One owns and operates his own manufacturing business and another helped write a textbook for the precision metal fabrication program entitled The Shear Edge.

Innovative arrangements with equipment manufacturers, suppliers, and association members provided both new and used equipment valued at more than $750,000. Included were a new CNC laser cutting machine and CNC press brake loaned to the project by U.S. Amada Limited. The company loaned the machines to demonstrate the technology to prospective customers and to train the students in the precision metal fabrication program.

Additional CNC press brakes, shears, grainers, sanders, riveters, seven screw machines, tooling, and software were also donated or loaned for training purposes. Industry agreed to supply the training program with sheet metal, bar stock, and other supplies.

The college recruited students using a variety of methods (see objective #5). Recruitment for the training programs insured that unemployed and dislocated workers, injured workers, women, and other economically disadvantaged people were represented according to the grant's recruitment objectives. Each applicant was required to take a mathematics placement assessment to assure competency in the fundamentals of arithmetic. Applicants unable to demonstrate such competency were referred to "refresher" math courses prior to entering the program.

The certificate programs were designed to allow open enrollment at the beginning of each term, with a maximum enrollment of fifteen students in each program at any given time. The fifteen students in each class could be enrolled in the first, second or third term of the program with the three levels managed concurrently by one instructor. In addition to technical training, the certificate programs required students to complete courses in applied beginning algebra, technical mathematics, blueprint reading, flat pattern development, statistical process control, and geometric tolerancing and dimensioning. Although the overall focus of these programs was technical skills, students were trained in team building, interpersonal skills, work place problem solving, resume writing and interview skills.

Precision Metal Fabrication Enrollment

	First Term Students	Second Term Students	Third Term Students	Term Total
Fall '90	7	0	0	7
Winter '91	2	7	0	9
Spring '91	7**	2*	7	16
Total No. Graduates in Prec. Metal Fab. 6/91		9		

* Were given advanced course work to complete graduation by 6/91.

** Students expected to continue studies in Fall 1991.

Screw Machine Technology Enrollment

	First Term Students	Second Term Students	Third Term Students	Term Total
Fall '90	7	0	0	7
Winter '91	4	7	0	11
Spring '91	5**	4**	7	16
Summer '91	0	0	2 (spec arrg)	2
Total No. Graduates in Screw Machine Tech. Program 8/91		9		

** Two students in the screw machine program completed the program by special arrangement during the summer 1991; other students expected to continue studies in Fall 1991.

To complement the certificate programs, Clackamas Community College developed additional support courses for the industry, including tool & cam design, MasterCam, CADKEY, and CNC laser cutting machine operation. These courses were offered in the evening and on weekends.

Much time and effort were spent on the development of 2+2 programs with area high schools. However, a number of intervening factors prevented the completion of this goal. Oregon schools were anticipating the economic consequences resulting from the passage of Oregon ballot measure #5, which limited property taxes currently used to fund public schools. Secondary school administrators agreed the 2+2 plans were viable, but were hesitant to commit additional funds and staff given the uncertain funding sources created by the tax limitation initiative.

In 1991 the Oregon Legislature passed major legislation requiring a comprehensive reorganization of both primary and secondary education. Under the legislation basic secondary education would be completed at the end of 10th grade. Students would then be given the opportunity to choose between college preparatory classes or professional/technical training. Statewide, primary and secondary schools and community colleges have begun planning for these changes. The 2+2 programs and associate degree programs required in the original grant will be a critical part of this new education system.

2. Design and implement a work-readiness assessment and training program.

The six-week training program was designed to provide entry level trainees with the basic skills required for initial employment in the precision manufacturing industry. The pilot program, entitled "Introduction to Precision Manufacturing," began in April 1990, offering training in technical math, blueprint reading, use of precision measuring instruments, problem solving skills, machine shop safety, and hand and power tool usage. Industry tours provided opportunities for students to become acquainted with the workplace.

These programs were offered to students free of charge. The target audiences for these programs were the unemployed and underemployed. Applicants were assessed in two phases. First, the applicant was required to take the standard college placement examination in mathematics, reading and writing. Second, applicants met with the program instructor for a personal interview and performance tests involving spatial relationships. The philosophy of the assessment process was not to screen individuals but to recognize potential strengths and weaknesses prior to the beginning of the program. The instructor could then adapt the course content to better meet the needs of the immediate group.

Six work readiness programs were offered between April 1990 and April 1991. Seventy-nine students entered these programs; sixty-five students completed, of which over 80% were placed. Refinements were made to the initial curriculum with each successive program. The program was lengthened to eight weeks, allowing students sufficient time to better understand the course materials and acquire part-time employment. The unanticipated economic downturn in 1990-91 made fewer jobs available. To make graduates of the work-readiness programs more attractive and employable in industries outside the precision metals, additions were made to the curriculum. Optional courses in first aid/CPR and forklift driving were offered. Additional emphasis was also placed on team-building, work readiness, life and work problem solving, career and goal planning, resume writing and interviewing techniques. The program was originally taught by one staff member. However, near the end of the grant period several additional faculty members contributed teaching time, sharing individual talents and technical strengths.

3. Provide staff development and training for instructors.

Instructors for the six-week and nine-month programs attended a "Train-the-Trainer" program during the summer of 1990. At that time, all of the faculty had come directly from industry and had no teaching experience. The instructors attended a "Power Presentation Skills" seminar later in the year as a follow-up to this initial training. This training greatly contributed to their ability to work with adult and disadvantaged populations. Continuous support and guidance was provided to these instructors throughout the course of the grant.

In addition, faculty training was provided on state-of-the-art equipment loaned to the Center. One instructor attended a week-long seminar at the U.S. Amada School in California to learn the operation of the CNC laser cutting machine, and another support staff member, responsible for machine maintenance, attended the same seminar for a two-week period. Additional training was provided in Brooklyn, New York on the operation of the CNC plasma cutting machine. One instructor attended a course to learn about the coordinate measuring machine.

4. Establish a replicable model that could be used by other groups interested in metals manufacturing.

The curriculum for the certificate precision metal fabrication program is available for dissemination in a text entitled The Shear Edge. Curricula is also available for the screw machine certificate program, and a comprehensive, competency-based curricula is available for the six-week work readiness program.

Presentations were made by staff at the following conferences regarding the training programs and techniques used to create them:

* Regional Partnership Conference sponsered by NW Regional Education Lab, Winter 1990
* 1990 Work Now and In the Future Conference
* University of Missouri Training Institute, March 1991
* Oregon Vocational Career Counselors, April 1991
* National Coalition of Advanced Technology Centers, Spring 1991, Fall 1991

An article entitled "Forming the Future," written by staff member Nicole Skinner, has been published in the ERIC database. Articles concerning specific programs have been published in nationally-distributed periodicals such as Automatic Machining and The Fabricator. Local community colleges have received copies of the complete competency-based curriculum for the work readiness programs and certificate program outlines.

Two groups of high school manufacturing instructors and students have visited the Center to become familiar with the Center's programs and plan for the development of the 2+2 portion of the training program. In August 1990 the training center was represented by staff and students at the Oregon State Fair for ten days. Members of both industry associations represented the training facility and programs at the Portland World of Work Fair in the spring of 1991.

5. **Develop recruitment package designed to attract adults and high school students with special emphasis given to minority populations and women.**

The training center's recruitment plan targeted displaced workers, minority populations, women, career changers, unemployed and underemployed, immigrant populations, and injured workers. Program brochures, videos and application forms aided staff members during visits to public and private organizations, including high schools, alternative schools, employment offices, Adult and Family Service offices, community colleges, refugee centers, private industry councils, urban leagues, dislocated workers programs, and women's groups. Agency representatives were involved in the design of recruitment activities for each group. The close working relationship between the Center and state and private vocational rehabilitation and insurance groups seeking retraining for injured workers resulted in numerous student referrals.

Five students were employed by industry at the time they entered the certificate programs. Their employers made arrangements for them to attend classes and maintain their employment, and in many cases, paid for or reimbursed the students for the cost of instruction.

The training center staffed a public awareness booth at the Oregon State Fair in August 1990 for ten days. Feature stories appeared in such national trade magazines as The Fabricator and Automatic Machining. A local television station produced a feature story on the training center in relation to economic development in the state of Oregon.

Newspaper advertisements were used to solicit students for the six-week Introduction to Precision Manufacturing programs, and public service radio announcements and cable access were used to promote public awareness of all programs.

The programs and courses were printed in the Clackamas Community College term schedule of classes which is mailed quarterly to 100,000 residents and businesses. Specialized mailings were sent to individual industry association members and Society of Manufacturing Engineers members each term notifying them of current course offerings.

Center staff and industry personnel represented the training center at high school and community college career fairs and The World of Work Fair in Portland. High school metals/manufacturing instructors attended seminars at the training center, and two classes of high school students visited the training site. While all of these activities helped recruitment efforts, the most successful recruitment activity was personal contact with an organization, followed by a visit to the training center.

6. **Offer 36 classes for 200 students by Summer 1991.**

Enrollment and Sections Data

1989 - 90 School Year	Sections	Head Count
Winter '90	15 Sections	174 Students
Spring '90	36 Sections	317 Students
School Year Totals	51 Sections	491 Students

1990 -91 School Year	Sections	Head Count
Summer '90	6 Sections	70 Students
Fall '90	21 Sections	200 Students
Winter '91	33 Sections	265 Students
Spring '91	45 Sections	318 Students
School Year Totals	105 Sections	853 Students
Two Year Totals (18 Months)	156 Sections	1,344 Students

7. **Fill 100 job vacancies.**

I. Work Readiness "Introduction to Precision Manufacturing" Programs

Of the 79 students enrolled in the six sessions of Introduction to Precision Manufacturing, 65 students graduated (82%). Twelve graduates chose not to seek immediate employment, seven entered the nine-month certificate programs at the training center, two enrolled in unrelated college programs, one student returned to high school, one entered the armed services, and one (a professional musician) chose not to seek employment in the metals industry.

Of the 53 graduates seeking employment, 43 had been employed as of May 1991 (81%).

Areas of Employment for Intro to Precision Manufacturing Graduates

Precision Metal Fabrication	21 placements	48%
Screw Machine Industry	9 placements	20%
Related Industrial Areas	7 placements	16%
Unrelated Areas	7 placements	16%

Two additional Introduction to Precision Manufacturing programs were offered in the spring and summer of 1991 beyond the requirements of the federal grant. These programs were expanded to eight weeks and each student was required to pay a fee of $1,195 to cover the costs of instruction. A total of 18 students attended these two sessions, most of them referred by private vocational rehabilitation agencies and the local Adult and Family Services division. All of the students completed the program, and five are currently employed in related industries.

II. Screw Machine Technology and Precision Metal Fabrication Certificate Programs

In June 1991 there were seven graduates in the screw machine program. One graduate moved out of state and chose not to accept employment in the screw machine industry. The other six graduates are now employed with local screw machine companies (86%). Two additional students graduated from this program at the end of August 1991. One of these graduates started his own company.

Nine students graduated from the precision metal fabrication program in June. One of those students has not reached the legal age for employment in a manufacturing setting (18 years). However, the remaining eight graduates are now working in the precision metal fabrication industry (89%).

Seven students will be continuing their studies as second and third term students in the screw machine program in the fall of 1991. Seven students will be returning as third term students in the metal fabrication program. It is anticipated that these students will also be successfully placed following graduation.

III. Placement Procedures

Students from all three programs were assisted in developing personal resumes to be kept on file at the training center. Student resumes, accompanied by a cover letter outlining the skills learned in the program, were mailed from the Center to area companies at the end of each program. In addition, members of the industrial communities volunteered time to conduct "mock interviews" to help students improve their interviewing skills.

A comprehensive job search and placement effort was initiated and maintained by project staff. Follow-up was done with companies where graduates had been placed to learn how the training programs could be improved in the future.

8. Evaluate the project.

The project's goal was to develop a model center to train current and potential employees in the precision metals industries using the combined resources of the private sector, education and government. This has been done. From planning, to recruitment, to implementation, to job placement, industry and agencies have participated and assisted project staff in meeting these goals.

This project has been evaluated by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory based in Portland, Oregon. The evaluation report, prepared by Mr. Tom Owens in June 1991, has already been submitted.

The success of the project, in part, can be measured by the industries' and public and private vocational rehabilitation agencies'continued demand for the training programs. Clackamas Community College has dedicated funds and space to continue the two certificate programs at a permanent college facility now

under construction in Wilsonville. The work readiness Introduction to Precision Manufacturing program has already been continued beyond the requirements of the grant. Two additional programs, paid for by student fees, were offered this past spring and summer. Most students were referred by state or private agencies that often paid the fees.

Industry support, despite a recessed economy, is reflected in its continued involvement. As a direct result of the pilot screw machine training program and local industry support, Index GmbH plans to loan the training center a new CNC screw machine to provide an opportunity for advanced technical training for students and local companies. It is anticipated that the machine-loan program initiated by the Center with U.S. Amada will continue into the next year as well.

The curricula is competency-based and is suitable for replication. A textbook entitled The Shear Edge was written by project staff and is available through Clackamas Community College. Staff have participated in many appropriate activities to share project techniques and information. With little modification, the Oregon Metals Industry Council plans to use the work-readiness curricula developed at the training center for use in the primary metals industry during the next year.

There were, however, unanticipated difficulties in implementing the grant project. The uncertain economic marketplace made industry employers hesitant to employ new workers. There was no public transportation available to the training facility, causing frequent difficulties for a student population comprised of the unemployed and underemployed. The donated machinery was expensive to transport to the Center, in addition to creating unanticipated maintenance and tooling needs. Despite the loans and donations of machinery, there continues to be a need for additional CNC equipment, especially in the screw machine program.

Hundreds of students have benefitted from the training offered at the Center. Sixteen students have already graduated from certificate programs and many more will complete graduation requirements in the coming months. Sixty-five students completed the Introduction to Precision Manufacturing programs; over 80% of those students seeking work are now employed and many others have gone on to additional training.

However, individual success stories reflect the real success of the project:

> Tanya, a twenty-two year old woman with one child, had numerous learning disabilities and was a high school drop-out. She was referred to the work-readiness program through the community college's Targeted Learning Center and Adult and Family Services. Tanya completed the six-week program successfully and was granted a scholarship through the college to attend the nine-month certificate program in metal fabrication. Tanya graduated in June and is now employed in a precision metal fabrication company earning $7 per hour.
>
> Robert was referred to the work-readiness program by his vocational rehabilitation counselor. While on a tour with his class to a local screw machine company, Robert was offered a job upon completion of the program at $8 per hour. In addition the company volunteered to pay Robert's tuition while he attended the certificate screw machine program. He received a pay raise to $10 per hour in June, and it is anticipated he will return to complete the program this fall.
>
> Sunny, a forty-four year old Thai woman, attended the work-readiness program and found immediate employment at a precision metal fabrication company. She received a $2 per hour pay raise after the first 60 days, was told she had broken all company production records, and has been asked to design an assembly department for the company. She will eventually have six other people working under her supervision.

The success attained by these individuals reflects the true strength of the training developed under this grant. Industry representatives and Center staff feel a sense of "pride in ownership" and seek to continually improve the programs through an open and candid evaluation and assessment process. The solid relationships forged between the training center and public and private agencies continue to aid in recruitment, retention and placement of students both now and in the future.

As a result of this training grant, many new individuals have entered the Oregon precision metals industry. Many more individuals already employed in the industry have upgraded their current skills. There is a genuine demand for the precision metals training programs by industry and human resource agencies, and these programs will continue beyond the grant period.

CONCLUSIONS

While Ballot Measure #5 and the economic fluctuations of the targeted industries sometimes hindered the grant's objectives, we feel the overall project was an outstanding success.

The Federal High Tech Cooperative Demonstrative Grant has :

- Established an on-going series of industry specific training programs
- Established a model for similar projects that other industries in other regions can duplicate
- Increased the training and career options for the unemployed and underemployed in Oregon's Willamette Valley
- Attracted the interest, involvement and contributions of a variety of private corporations
- Addressed and eased the anticipated industry skill shortages and provided a long term solution to these problems
- Significantly contributed to the program graduates' future employment options
- Established a successful model of cooperation between industry, equipment suppliers and manufacturers, social service agencies, workers compensation insurance representatives, community colleges and the federal government.

As a compliment to the funding source and project staff, three recent events attest to the value of this effort.

A. The loan of a 'state of the art' $400,000.00 Mutli-Turret CNC Screw Machine to the training effort by Index GmbH Incorporated of Germany and Leupold and Stevens of Beaverton, Oregon. These companies have agreed to replace this equipment on an annual basis with the latest technology.

B. A request for technical assistance from an Adult and Family Services funded Inventory Control and Manufacturing training projects. These projects wish to replicate the human relations, problem solving and life & career planning component developed under this grant.

C. The receipt of a State of Oregon Economic Development Grant to create a similar series of training programs for Oregon's Primary Metals Industry.